بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ ١

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَٰلَمِينَ ٢ الرَّحْمَٰنِ

الرَّحِيمِ ٣ مَٰلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ٤

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ٥

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَٰطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ٦

صِرَٰطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ

الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّآلِّينَ ٧

Abū Saʿīd after he had recited it to cure a person, the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) asked him,

"...and what made you know it was a ruqyā, Spiritual Cure?..."

BUKHĀRĪ #264 #476

The Spiritual Cure

An Explanation to Sūrah al-Fātiḥah

A summary of numerous
classical commentaries of the Qur'ān

at-Ṭabarī, as-Sama'ānī, al-Baghawī, az-Zamakhsharī, ibn 'Aṭiyyah, ibn al-Jawzī, ar-Rāzī, al-Qurṭubī, ibn al-Qayyim, ibn Kathīr, as-Suyūṭī, al-Ālūsī, ash-Shawkanī, as-Sa'dī, ash-Shanqīṭī and many others

Prepared and translated by Abū Rumaysah

دار السنة
DAAR US-SUNNAH PUBLISHERS
BIRMINGHAM

CONTENTS

CHAPTER FIVE

The All-Merciful (*ar-Raḥmān*), The Most Merciful (*ar-Raḥīm*)

CHAPTER SIX

Master of the Day of Judgement

CHAPTER SEVEN

You Alone do we worship and You Alone do we ask for help

Transliteration Table

Consonants. Arabic

initial: unexpressed medial and final:

ء '	د d	ض ḍ	ك k
ب b	ذ dh	ط ṭ	ل l
ت t	ر r	ظ ẓ	م m
ث th	ز z	ع '	ن n
ج j	س s	غ gh	هـ h
ح ḥ	ش sh	ف f	و w
خ kh	ص ṣ	ق q	ي y

Vowels, diphthongs, etc.

Short:	ـَ a	ـِ i	ـُ u
long:	ـَا ā	ـُو ū	ـِي ī
diphthongs:		ـَوْ aw	
		ـَيْ ay	

Sūrah al-Fātiḥah (1) : 1-7

بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ ١

1. With the Name of Allāh,
The All-Merciful, The Most Merciful

ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ٢

2. All Praises and thanks are due to Allāh

ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ ٣

3. The All-Merciful (*ar-Raḥmān*),
The Most Merciful (*ar-Raḥīm*)

مَٰلِكِ يَوْمِ ٱلدِّينِ ٤

4. Master of the Day of Judgement

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ﴿٥﴾

5. You Alone we worship, You Alone we ask for help

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿٦﴾
صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ

6. Guide us to the Straight Path,
The Path of those whom You have favoured

غَيْرِ
الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ﴿٧﴾

7. Not [the path] of those who have earned [Your] anger,
nor those who have gone astray

INTRODUCTION

With the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful

Sūrah al-Fātiḥah is the greatest chapter of the Qur'ān, its like is not found in the rest of the Book or in the previous scriptures. It is a light that was granted to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) which had not been granted to any other Prophet or Messenger before him; indeed some of the Salaf stated that when this chapter was revealed, Shayṭān let out a great cry of lament. It holds a central position in the daily prayer and hence the daily life of the Muslim.

The underlying theme of *al-Fātiḥah* is one of contemplation and serenity; pondering the Names and Attributes of Allāh, pondering the creation, and acknowledging that He Alone deserves praise and worship, that He Alone should be asked for help, that He Alone should be feared and hoped in, that He Alone should be invoked, that there is indeed a Day of Judgment, and that guidance has come to us and we are required to follow it. It calls us to carefully scrutinise our relationship with our Lord: are we living according to the dictates of 'none has the right to be worshipped save of Allāh' or not?[1] This opening chapter, despite its brevity, calls man to fulfil

[1] al-Baqāʿī, vol.1, pg.12; al-Fairozabādī, vol.1, pg.12

the rights of *Tawḥīd*, the right that Allāh has over us to worship Him Alone without any partners, in thirty places.[2]

This chapter summarises succinctly the message of the whole Qur'ān.

Owing to the importance of this chapter, this commentary has been collated. It is a summary of numerous classical commentaries of the Qur'ān, these being

1. at-Ṭabarī (d. 310H), Abū Ja'far Muḥammad bin Jarīr, *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Ta'wīl al-Qur'ān*, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1st ed., 1412/1992, 12 volumes
2. as-Sama'ānī (d. 489H), Abū al-Muẓaffar Manṣūr bin Muḥammad, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, Dār al-Waŷan, Riyād, 1st ed., 1418/1997, 6 volumes
3. al-Baghawī (d. 516H), Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn bin Mas'ūd, *Ma'ālim at-Tanzīl*, Dār at-Ṭaybah, Riyad, 2nd ed., 1414/1993, 8 volumes
4. az-Zamakhsharī (d. 538), Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd bin 'Umar, *al-Kashshāf 'an Ḥaqā'iq at-Tanzīl wa 'Uyūn al-Aqāwīl fī Wujūh at-Ta'wīl*, Dār Iḥyā' at-Turāth al-'Arabī, Beirut, 1st ed., 1417/1197, with the notes of ibn al-Munayyir (d. 683H), 4 volumes
5. ibn 'Aṭiyyah (d. 546), Abū Muḥammad 'Abdu-l-Ḥaqq bin Ghālib, *al-Muḥarrar al-Wajīz fī Tafsīr al-Kitāb al-'Azīz*, Maktabah Bāz, Mecca, 1st ed., 1422/2001, 6 vols.
6. ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597), Abū al-Faraj Jamālu-d-Dīn 'Abdur-Raḥmān, *Zād al-Masīr fī 'Ilm at-Tafsīr*, al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 4th ed., 1407/1987, 9 volumes
7. ar-Rāzī (d. 606H), Muḥammad bin 'Umar bin al-Ḥusayn, *at-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, Dār Iḥyā' at-Turāth al-'Arabī, Beirut, 1st ed., 1415/1997, 11 volumes

[2] Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān, *al-Dīn al-Khāliṣ*, vol. 1, pg. 7 who proceeds to list them.

8. al-Qurṭubī (d. 671H), Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad bin Aḥmad, *al-Jāmi' li-l-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 5th ed., 1417/1996, 20+1 volumes
9. Abū Ḥayyān (d. 745H), Muḥammad bin Yūsuf, *al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ*, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1st ed., 1413/1993, 8 volumes
10. ibn al-Qayyim (d. 751H), Shamsu-d-Dīn Muḥammad bin Abū Bakr, *Tafsīr al-Qayyim*, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, collated by M. an-Nadwī, 1 volume
11. ibn Kathīr (d. 774H), 'Imādu-d-Dīn Abū al-Fi±ā' Ismā'īl, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, Jam'iyyah Iḥyā at-Turāth al-Islāmī, Kuwait, 1st ed, 1414/1994, 4 volumes
12. al-Bayḍāwī (d. 791), Nāṣir ad-Dīn Abū Sa'īd 'Abdullāh Abū 'Umar bin Muḥammad, *al-Anwār at-Tanzīl wa-l-Asrār at-Ta'wīl*, Dār al-Fikr, Beirut, 1st ed., 1416/1996, with the explanation of al-Kāzrūnī, 5 volumes
13. ibn 'Ādil (d. 880H), Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar bin 'Alī, *al-Lubāb fī 'Ulūm al-Kitāb*, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1st ed., 1419/1998, 20 volumes
14. al-Baqā'ī (d. 885H), Burhān ad-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan Ibrāhīm bin 'Umar, *Naẓm ad-Durar fī Tanāsub al-Āyāt wa-s-Suwar*, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1st ed., 1415/1995, 8 volumes
15. as-Suyūṭī (d. 911H), Jalālu-d-Dīn 'Abdur-Raḥmān bin Abū Bakr, *ad-Durr al-Manthūr fī-t-Tafsīr al-Ma'thūr*, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1st ed., 1421/2000, 6+1 volumes
16. al-Khāzin (d. 725), 'Alā'u-d-Dīn 'Alī bin Muḥammad, *Lubāb at-Ta'wīl fī Ma'ānī at-Tanzīl*, Dār al-Fikr, Beirut, in the margin of which is an-Nasafī, *Madārik at-Tanzīl wa Ḥaqā'iq at-Ta'wīl*, 4 volumes
17. al-Ālūsī (d. 1270H), Abū al-Faḍl Shihāb ad-Dīn Maḥmūd, *Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aµīm wa-s-Sab' al-Mathānī*, Dār Iḥyā' at-Turāth al-Arabī, 1st ed., 1420/1999, 29 volumes
18. ash-Shawkanī (d. 1250H), Muḥammad 'Alī bin Muḥammad, *Fatḥ*

al-Qadīr al-Jāmi' bayna fannay ar-Riwāya wa-d-Dirāyah min 'Ilm at-Tafsīr, 'Ālam al-Kutub, 4 volumes
19. Riḍā (d. 1865H), Muḥammad Rashīd, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1st ed., 1420/1999, 12 volumes
20. as-Sa'dī, *Taysīr al-Karīm ar-Raḥmān*, Mu'assasatu'l-Risālah, 1 volume.
21. ash-Shanqīṭī (d. 1393), Muḥammad al-Amīn, *Aḍwā' al-Bayān fī īdāḥ al-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān*, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1st ed., 1417/1996, 10 volumes
22. Sālim, 'Aṭiyyah Muḥammad, *Āyātu-l-Hidāyah wa-l-Istiqāmah fī Kitābillāh*, Dār at-Turāth, Madīnah, 1st ed., 1414/1993, 2 volumes

Moreover a number of works dealing with *'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* were also referred to:

1. al-Kirmānī (d. 500H), Maḥmūd bin Ḥamzah bin Naṣr, *al-Burhān fī Mutashābih al-Qur'ān*, Dār as-Ṣādir, Beirut, 2nd ed., 1417/1996, 1 volume
2. al-Aṣbahānī (d. 502H), Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn bin Muḥammad, *al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Dār al-Ma'rifah, Beirut, 1st ed., 1418/1998, 1 volume
3. az-Zarkashī (d. 794H), Badr ad-Dīn Muḥammad bin 'Abdullāh, *al-Burhān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, Dār at-Turāth, Cairo, 4 volumes
4. al-Fayrozabādī (d. 817H), Muḥammad bin Ya'qūb, *Baṣā'ir Dhawī at-Tamyīz*, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 6 volumes
5. as-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 3rd ed., 1415/1995, 2 volumes
6. as-Suyūṭī, *Mu'tarik al-Aqrān fī I'jāz al-Qur'ān*, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, 1st ed., 1408/1988, 3 volumes
7. as-Suyūṭi, *Asrār Tartīb al-Qur'ān*, Dār al-Faṣīlah, Cairo, 1 volume

Exegesis of a fathomless ocean such as the Book of Allāh can never be complete and it is a study that one undertakes throughout

the course of his life. This commentary is but a tiny portion of the material available in exegesis to this chapter, much has been omitted, much has been summarised, but it should go some way in giving the reader a glimpse at the depth of meaning found therein and at the extent of the efforts of our scholars, may Allāh have mercy upon them all, in undertaking the momentous task of explaining the Qur'ān.

I ask Allāh that He count this effort amongst the scales of my good works and forgive me for any errors contained therein.

Abū Rumaysah

CHAPTER I

al-Fātiḥah

1.1 Its Name

This chapter has a great many names, each one indicating a different aspect of its meaning. In the eyes of the Arabs if a thing had many different names, this was an indication of its importance.[1]

It is named *al-Fātiḥah*, the Opening - because it opens the Book and by it the recitation in prayer commences.

It is also named *Ummu-l-Qur'ān*, the Mother of the Qur'ān, and *Ummu-l-Kitāb*, the Mother of the Book, according to the opinion of the majority. This was mentioned by Anas, however al-Ḥasan and ibn Sīrīn disliked this appellation reasoning that this was the most fitting description for the Preserved Tablet. al-Ḥasan also said that the unequivocal verses of the Qur'ān comprised the Mother of the Book. However, it is established in at-Tirmidhī on the authority of Abū Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

> [The chapter commencing with] ***"All praise and thanks are due to Allāh the Lord of the worlds"*** is the Mother

---

[1] as-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, vol. 1, pg. 116; al-Khāzin vol. 1, pg. 11

> of the Qur'ān, the Mother of the Book, the Seven Oft-Repeated Verses and the Great Qur'ān.[2]

Bukhārī said in the beginning of the Book of *Tafsīr* in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*,

> It is named *Ummu-l-Qur'ān* because it is the first chapter written in the Qur'ānic texts and the recitation in prayer commences with it.[3]

Ibn Jarīr at-Ṭabarī said that it was named so because the meaning of the entire Qur'ān is summarised therein. The Arabs named anything that concisely summarises something or comprises its most important part, *Umm*, or mother.

For similar reasons it is also named *al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, the Great Qur'ān.

It is also named *Sab'u-l-Mathānī*, the Seven Oft-Repeated Verses, because they are frequently recited and indeed recited in every *rak'ah* of the prayer.

It is also named *al-Ḥamd*, the Praise, because it contains mention of *ḥamd* just as *al-Baqarah* is named so because it contains mention of the cow. Some scholars also gave the reasoning that *al-Ḥamd* comprises heart of *al-Fātiḥah*.[4]

---

[2] i.e. *Ummu-l-Qur'ān, Ummu-l-Kitāb, Sab'u-l-Mathānī* and *al-Qur'ānu-l-'Aẓīm.*
at-Tirmidhī #3124, Abū Dāwūd #1457, and Aḥmad #9788, 9790. at-Tirmidhī said it was ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ, it was ruled ḥasan by as-Suyūṭī, *al-Jāmi' as-Ṣaghīr* #3833, and ṣaḥīḥ by al-Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi'* #3184. Bukhārī #4704 also records it without the words, "the Mother of the Book".
Similar aḥādīth are also recorded on the authority of Abū Sa'īd ibn al-Mu'allā by Bukhārī #4703 and Ubayy ibn Ka'b by Aḥmad #21094, 21095

[3] Bukhārī Eng. Trans., vol. 6, pg. 1, chpt. 1

[4] as-Sindī, *Sharḥ as-Sindī 'alā ibn Mājah* #3790

It is also named *as-Ṣalāh*, the Prayer, due to his (ﷺ) saying while reporting from his Lord,

> I have divided the prayer between Myself and my servant equally. Therefore when the servant says, ***"All praise and thanks are due to Allāh, the Lord of the worlds"*** Allāh says, 'My servant has praised Me...'[5]

It is named the Prayer because its recitation is a condition for the validity of the prayer.[6]

It is also named *ash-Shifā'*, the Cure, due to what ad-Dārimī reports on the authority of Abū Sa'īd that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

> The Opening of the Book is a cure for every poison.[7]

It is also named *ar-Ruqyā*, the Spiritual Cure, due to the ḥadīth of Abū Sa'īd recorded by Bukhārī that after he had recited it to cure a person who had been bitten by a scorpion, the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) asked him,

---

[5] The referencing for this ḥadīth shall follow in the section concerning the virtues of *al-Fātiḥah* inshāAllāh.

[6] In the eyes of the majority of scholars, as will be explained shortly *inshāAllāh*.

[7] Sa'īd ibn Manṣūr and al-Bayhaqī, *ash-Shu'ab al-Īmān* #2368. ad-Daylamī and Abū ash-Shaykh also record it on the authority of Abū Hurayrah as per al-'Ijlūnī, *Kashf al-Khafā'* #1816. It was ruled ḍa'īf by as-Suyūṭī #5826, and mawḍū' by al-Albānī #3950

Bayhaqī #2366 also records on the authority of Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "It contains a cure from every illness." ad-Dārimī #3413, and al-Bayhaqī #2370, also record this wording on the authority of 'Abdu-l-Malik ibn 'Umayr with a mursal isnād as stated by al-Bayhaqī; this was ruled ḍa'īf by as-Suyūṭī #5827 and al-Albānī #3951

...and what made you know it was a *ruqya*?[8]

ash-Sha'bī records on the authority of ibn 'Abbās that he named it *Asāsu-l-Qur'ān*, the Foundation of the Qur'ān, and that he said, 'the foundation of *al-Fātiḥah* is, ***"with the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful."*** This is because just as *al-Fātiḥah* summarises within it the meaning of the whole Qur'ān, the whole meaning of *al-Fātiḥah* is summarised by this statement[9] as will be shown later.

Sufyān bin 'Uyaynah named it *al-Wāfiyah*, the Fulfillment, reasoning that it is not possible to apportion it into various parts when reciting, or to summarise it.

Yaḥyā bin Abū Kathīr named it *al-Kāfiyah*, the Sufficient, because it suffices from everything other than it but anything else does not suffice it. The mursal ḥadīth states,

> The Mother of the Book suffices for other than it but nothing else suffices it.[10,11]

---

[8] Bukhārī Eng. Trans., vol. 3, pg. 264 #476

[9] al-Ālūsī, vol. 1 pg. 88

[10] ad-Dāruquṭnī, vol. 1, pg. 322, and al-Ḥākim #867 on the authority of 'Ubādah ibn as-Ṣāmit. It was declared ḍa'īf by ibn al-Qaṭṭān as per al-Munāwī, *Fayḍ al-Qadīr*, vol. 1, pg. 231; and al-Albānī #1274.

Its isnād contains Muḥammad ibn Khallād about whom adh-Dhahabī, *al-Mīzān* said, 'It is not known who he is.... He was alone in reporting the ḥadīth of 'Ubādah ibn as-Ṣāmit from the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), "The Mother of the Book suffices for other than it but nothing else suffices it."... ad-Dāruquṭnī said: it was singularly reported from ibn Khallād, however the preserved ḥadīth from az-Zuhrī with this isnād is, "A prayer is not valid in which the Mother of the Book is not recited."'

[11] ibn 'Aṭiyyah, vol. 1, pg. 65; Qurṭubī, vol. 1, pp. 79-81; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pp. 26-27; az-Zarkashī, vol. 1, pp. 169-270; as-Suyūṭī, vol. 1, pp. 20-22

It is also named *al-Kanz*, the Treasure; *ash-Shukr*, Gratitude; *ad-Du'ā*, Supplication; *ash-Shāfiyah*, the Sufficent Cure; and *al-Wāqiyah*, the Protection as mentioned by al-Baqā'ī.[12]

1.2 Its Revelation

It was revealed in Mecca as stated by ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah and Abū al-'Āliyah.

It is also postulated that it was revealed in Madīnah as stated by Abū Hurayrah, Mujāhid, 'Aṭā' bin Yasār and az-Zuhrī. It is also said that it was revealed on two separate occasions - once in Mecca and once in Madīnah. However the first opinion is the most likely due to His saying,

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَٰكَ سَبْعًا مِّنَ ٱلْمَثَانِى وَٱلْقُرْءَانَ ٱلْعَظِيمَ

«We have sent to you the Seven Oft Repeated Verses...»

[*al-Ḥijr* (15): 87]

This verse was revealed in Mecca by agreement of the exegetes.

Abū al-Layth as-Samarqandī relates that half of it was revealed in Mecca and the remaining half in Madīnah as quoted from him by al-Qurṭubī but this is an extremely strange position.

It is said that this chapter was the first thing revealed of the Qur'ān as mentioned in the ḥadīth reported by al-Bayhaqī, *Dalā'il an-Nubuwwa*. al-Bāqillānī quoted this as one of three opinions. It is also said that the first revelation comprised the verses of *Sūrah al-*

---

[12] See also al-Fairozabādī, vol. 1, pp. 128-129 who lists about thirty names for this Sūrah

Muddaththir but the correct opinion is that the first revelation consisted of the beginning verses of *Sūrah al-'Alaq*.[13]

1.3 Its Composition

It consists of seven verses and there is no difference concerning this.[14] 'Amr bin 'Ubaid said that it consists of eight verses and Ḥusayn al-Ju'afī said that it consists of six verses but both of these opinions are irregular and rejected.

They have differed concerning the statement ***"with the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful."*** The majority of the reciters of Kūfa postulate that it comprises an independent verse of *al-Fātiḥah* and this is also the opinion of a group of the Ṣaḥābah, Tābi'īn and a large group of the later scholars. However the reciters and jurists of Madīnah regard it to be part of a verse, and not an independent verse, or not a verse at all.

Those who postulate that it is not a verse of *al-Fātiḥah* state that the seventh verse commences with the words, ***"not [the path] of those who have earned [Your] anger..."***[15]

al-Fātiḥah consists of twenty-five words and one hundred and thirteen letters.[16]

[13] ibn 'Aṭiyyah, vol. 1, pg. 65; ibn Kathīr vol. 1, pg. 26

[14] al-Baghawī, vol. 1, pg. 51; al-Fairozabādī, vol. 1, pg. 128

[15] ath-Tha'labī records this view from Abū Hurayrah as per as-Suyūṭī, vol. 1, pg. 42

[16] al-Baghawī, vol. 1, pg. 51; al-Qurṭubī, vol. 1, pg. 81; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 26; al-Fairozabādī, vol. 1, pg. 128

1.4 The Virtues of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah

There are a number of aḥādīth explaining to us the great virtue of this *sūrah*:

1. Muslim records on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) who said that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

> Allāh, the Glorious and Exalted said, "I have divided the prayer between Myself and My servant equally and My servant shall be granted what he asked for." Therefore when the servant says, 'All praises and thanks are due to Allāh, the Lord of the worlds', Allāh says, "My servant has praised Me." When he says, 'The All-Merciful, the Most Merciful,' Allāh says, "My servant has extolled Me." When he says, 'Master of the Day of Judgement,' Allāh says, "My servant has glorified Me." When he says, 'You Alone we worship and Your aid Alone do we seek,' Allāh says, "This is between Me and My servant and My servant shall have what he requested." When he says, 'Guide us to the Straight Path, the Path of those whom You have favoured, not [the path] of those who have earned [Your] anger, nor of those who have gone astray,' Allāh says, "This is for My servant and My servant shall have what he asked for."[17]

2. at-Tirmidhī records on the authority of Abū Hurayrah who said that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

> [The chapter commencing with], ***"All praise and thanks are due to Allāh the Lord of the worlds"*** is the Mother of the Qur'ān, the Mother of the Book, the Seven Oft

[17] Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 215 #775

Repeated Verses and the Great Qur'ān.[18]

3. Aḥmad records on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) who said,

> The Prophet (ﷺ) called Ubayy bin Ka'b while he was praying in the Mosque saying, "O Ubayy!" Ubayy turned his head towards him but did not reply. The Prophet (ﷺ) called him again saying, "O Ubayy!" So Ubayy shortened his prayer and turned towards the Prophet and said, "*as-salāmu 'alaikum* O Messenger of Allāh." The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, "*wa 'alaikum as-salām*. What prevented you from replying to me when I called you?" Ubayy said, "O Messenger of Allāh I was praying!" He said, "Does Allāh not say,
>
> اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ
>
> **«...Respond to Allāh and the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life»**
>
> [*al-Anfāl* (8): 24]
>
> Ubayy replied, "Yes O Messenger of Allāh! I will not do so again." The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) asked, "Would you like me to teach you a *Sūrah* the likes of which is not to be found in the Torah, Injīl, Zabūr, or the [rest of the] Qur'ān?" He said, "Yes O Messenger of Allāh." The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "I hope that I will not leave this door until you know it."
>
> Ubayy said, "Then he took hold of my hand and talked to me while I slowed down fearing that we may reach the door before he finished talking. When we did reach it I asked him, 'What is the *Sūrah* you promised me, O Messenger of Allāh?' He said, 'What is the *Sūrah* you

[18] The notes to this ḥadīth have preceded in fn. 2

recite in prayer?' So I recited the Mother of the Qur'ān upon which he said, 'By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, Allāh has not revealed the likes of it in the Torah, Injīl, Zabūr, or the [rest of the] Qur'ān. It is the Seven Oft-Repeated verses.'"[19]

4. Aḥmad records on the authority of Abū Sa'd ibn al-Mu'allā who said,

> The Prophet (ﷺ) called me while I was praying in the *Masjid* but I did not respond until I had completed the prayer. I went to him and he asked, "What prevented you from coming to me [earlier]?" I replied, "I was praying O Messenger of Allāh." He said, "Does Allāh not say,
>
> اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ
>
> **«...Respond to Allāh and the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life»**
>
> [*al-Anfāl* (8): 24]
>
> He then said, "I will teach a *Sūrah* which is the greatest *Sūrah* in the Qur'ān before you leave the *Masjid*." Then he took hold of my hand and when he intended to leave [the *Masjid*], I asked him, "Did you not say that you would teach me a *Sūrah* which is the greatest *Sūrah* in the Qur'ān?" He replied, "yes. It is [the *Sūrah* commencing with], ***"All praise and thanks are due to Allāh."*** It is the Seven Oft-Repeated verses and the Great Qur'ān that has been given to me."[20]

---

[19] Aḥmad #8682, 9345, 9788, 21094, 21095. It was declared ṣaḥīḥ by ibn Ḥibbān #775, ibn Khuzaymah #500, 501, and al-Albānī #5560

[20] Bukhārī Eng. Trans., vol. 6, pg. 1 #1; Aḥmad #15730, and the wording is his.

5. Muslim records on the authority of ibn 'Abbās (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) who said,

> While the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) was sitting with Jibrīl he heard a creaking sound above him. Jibrīl looked up and said, "This is [the sound of] a gate that has been opened in Paradise today and has never been previously opened." Then an Angel descended through it and came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said, "Rejoice in the good news of two lights that have been given to you such as no Prophet before you has been given. [They are] *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* and the concluding [two] verses of *Sūrah al-Baqarah*. You will never recite a word from them without being given the blessings they contain."[21]

This ḥadīth has led some scholars to suggest that Jibrīl did not convey the revelation of *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* and the last two verses of *al-Baqarah*, rather it was the Angel mentioned in this ḥadīth. However the correct opinion is that Jibrīl did indeed convey the revelation of these verses as he was enjoined by Allāh to convey the entire Qur'ān to the Prophet (ﷺ). The Angel that descended as mentioned in this ḥadīth, descended only to convey the reward of these verses.[22]

6. an-Nasā'ī records on the authority of Anas that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

> "Should I not inform you of the most noble and excellent part of the Qur'ān?" He then recited ***"All praise and thanks are due to Allāh, the Lord of the worlds"***[23]

[21] Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 2, pg. 586 #1759

[22] al-Qurṭubī, vol. 1, pp. 82-83

[23] an-Nasā'ī, *al-Kubrā* #8011. It was declared ṣaḥīḥ by ibn Ḥibbān #774, and al-Ḥākim #2056, with adh-Dhahabī remaining silent.

Mujāhid said, 'When this chapter was revealed it bore down heavily upon Iblīs and he let out a loud wail in lament; whoever does this is worthy of being cursed.'[24]

1.5 The Ruling of Reciting *al-Fātiḥah* in Prayer.

The opinion of the majority of the scholars, amongst them Mālik, ash-Shāfi'ī and Aḥmad, is that it is obligatory to recite *al-Fātiḥah* in the prayer and that the prayer is invalid without it. Their opinion is based upon many proofs; from amongst them, the sayings of the Prophet (ﷺ),

> There is no prayer for the one who does not recite the Opening of the Book.[25]
>
> Whosoever performs a prayer in which he does not recite the Mother of the Book then it is deficient, it is deficient, it is deficient, it is incomplete.[26]
>
> The prayer is not valid in which the Mother of the Qur'ān is not recited.[27]

However, according to Abū Ḥanīfah, those of his companions who agreed with him, al-Awzā'ī and ath-Thawrī, it is not obligatory to recite *al-Fātiḥah*, rather any portion of the Qur'ān would be sufficient. They based this upon the saying of Allāh,

---

[24] as-Suyūṭī, vol. 1, pg. 24

[25] Bukhārī Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 404 #723; Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 214 #771

[26] Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 215 #775

[27] Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 215 #772

فَٱقْرَءُوا۟ مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنَ ٱلْقُرْءَانِ

«Recite what is easy [for you] of the Qur'ān»
[*al-Muzzammil* (73): 20]

and the saying of the Prophet (ﷺ) to the man who prayed badly,

> When you stand to pray, say the *takbīr* and then recite what is easy for you of the Qur'ān.[28]

Moreover, according to ash-Shāfi'ī and a group of the People of Knowledge, it is obligatory to recite *al-Fātiḥah* in every *rak'ah* of the prayer. However, another group were of the opinion that it is sufficient to recite it in the majority of the *rak'ahs* and yet another group, from amongst them al-Ḥasan and the majority of the scholars of Baṣrah, were of the opinion that it is sufficient just to recite it in one *rak'ah*. This latter group took to the literal sense of the ḥadīth,

> There is no prayer for the one who does not recite the Opening of the Book

In the case where one is a follower in a congregational prayer, the scholars fell into three opinions with regards to his reciting *al-Fātiḥah*:

1. It is obligatory upon him to recite it in all prayers.
2. It is upon him not to recite it in all prayers.
3. He should recite it in those prayers in which the recitation is silent, but not in those prayers in which the recitation is loud.

The point here is not to discuss which is the strongest opinion

---

[28] Bukhārī Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 404 #724

but to show that *al-Fātiḥah* has specific rulings to it that are not shared by any other chapter of the Qur'ān. Allāh Knows best.[29]

[29] ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pp. 30-31

CHAPTER II

The Ruling of *Isti'ādhah* (Seeking Refuge)

2.1 The Enmity of *Shayṭān*

Allāh, Exalted is He says,

خُذِ ٱلْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ
بِٱلْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ ٱلْجَٰهِلِينَ ﴿١٩٩﴾ وَإِمَّا يَنزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ
ٱلشَّيْطَٰنِ نَزْغٌ فَٱسْتَعِذْ بِٱللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٠٠﴾

«Show forgiveness, enjoin what is good and turn away from the foolish. And if an evil suggestion comes to you from *Shayṭān*, seek refuge with Allāh. Indeed He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing»

[*al-A'rāf* (7): 199-200]

ٱدْفَعْ بِٱلَّتِى هِىَ أَحْسَنُ ٱلسَّيِّئَةَ ۚ نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَصِفُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾
وَقُل رَّبِّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَمَزَٰتِ ٱلشَّيَٰطِينِ ﴿٩٧﴾ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ
رَبِّ أَن يَحْضُرُونِ ﴿٩٨﴾

«Repel evil by means of what is best. We are best Acquainted with the things that they utter. And say, 'My Lord! I take refuge with you from the whisperings of the devils and I take refuge with You my Lord lest they come near me.'»

[*al-Mu'minūn* (23): 96-98]

وَلَا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ
ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ
وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَمَا يُلَقَّاهَا إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَمَا يُلَقَّاهَا
إِلَّا ذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَإِمَّا يَنزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْغٌ
فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٣٦﴾

«...Repel [evil] with that which is better then indeed the one, between whom and you there was enmity, [will become] as though he was a devoted friend. But none is granted [this quality] except those who are patient and none is granted it save one who possesses a great portion [of high moral character]. And if an evil suggestion comes to you from *Shayṭān*, seek refuge with Allāh, indeed He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing»

[*Fuṣṣilāt* (41): 34-46]

These verses command the servant of Allāh to seek refuge with Him from the accursed *Shayṭān* due to the severe enmity he displays towards mankind and displayed towards their father, Ādam (*alayhi-salām*). Allāh says,

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ لَا يَفْتِنَنَّكُمُ
الشَّيْطَانُ كَمَا أَخْرَجَ أَبَوَيْكُم مِّنَ الْجَنَّةِ

«O Children of Ādam! Let not *Shayṭān* deceive you,

as he removed your parents out of Paradise»

[*al-Aʿrāf* (7): 27]

Ibn al-Jawzī said,

> Servants of Allāh! Ponder the removal of your father, Ādam, from Paradise, the abode of security, and his descent to the abode of disgrace and abasement. The reason for this was none other than the accursed *Shayṭān*. Your Master has prohibited you from obeying him and ordered you to disobey him. Indeed in his obedience lies the displeasure of *ar-Raḥmān* and disobeying him necessitates residing in Paradise and the descent of divine pleasure. Allāh, Glorified and Exalted said,
>
> ٱلشَّيْطَٰنُ يَعِدُكُمُ ٱلْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُم بِٱلْفَحْشَآءِ
>
> **«*Shayṭān* threatens you with poverty and orders you to immorality»**
>
> [*al-Baqarah* (2): 268]
>
> So whoever obeys him, he forsakes him, diverts him from true guidance and opens the doors to misguidance and ignominy in his heart.[1]

Allāh further explains to us the extreme enmity of *Shayṭān* with His words,

إِنَّ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ فَٱتَّخِذُوهُ
عَدُوًّا ۚ إِنَّمَا يَدْعُوا۟ حِزْبَهُۥ لِيَكُونُوا۟ مِنْ أَصْحَٰبِ ٱلسَّعِيرِ ﴿٦﴾

> **«Indeed *Shayṭān* is an open enemy to you so take him as an enemy. He invites his followers only that they may become the denizens of the blazing Fire»**
>
> [*Fāṭir* (35): 6]

[1] Ibn al-Jawzī, *Bustān al-Wāʿiẓīn*, p. 27

أَفَتَتَّخِذُونَهُۥ وَذُرِّيَّتَهُۥٓ أَوْلِيَآءَ مِن دُونِى وَهُمْ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّۢ بِئْسَ لِلظَّـٰلِمِينَ بَدَلًا ﴿٥٠﴾

«Will you then take him and his offspring as friends and protectors besides Him while they are open enemies to you? Wretched it is as an exchange for the wrong-doers»

[*al-Kahf* (18): 50]

Shayṭān took an oath saying,

قَالَ فَبِعِزَّتِكَ لَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٨٢﴾ إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ ٱلْمُخْلَصِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾

«By Your Might! I will surely misguide them all, except Your chosen slaves amongst them»

[*Ṣād* (38): 82-83]

It is for this reason that we have been encouraged to seek refuge with Allāh from the accursed *Shayṭān.*

2.2 *Isti'ādhah* for recitation

With regards reciting the Qur'ān, Allāh, Exalted is He says,

فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ ٱلْقُرْءَانَ فَٱسْتَعِذْ بِٱللَّهِ مِنَ ٱلشَّيْطَـٰنِ ٱلرَّجِيمِ ﴿٩٨﴾ إِنَّهُۥ لَيْسَ لَهُۥ سُلْطَـٰنٌ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾ إِنَّمَا سُلْطَـٰنُهُۥ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ يَتَوَلَّوْنَهُۥ وَٱلَّذِينَ هُم بِهِۦ مُشْرِكُونَ

«When you wish to read [lit: have read] **the Qur'ān, seek refuge with Allāh from the accursed *Shayṭān*.**

Indeed he has no power over those who believe and put their trust only in their Lord. His power is only over those who follow him and join partners with Him»

[*an-Naḥl* (16): 99-100]

A group of the reciters and scholars, from amongst them Ḥamza, ibn Sīrīn, Ibrāhīm an-Nakha'ī and Dāwūd adh-Dhāhirī, were of the opinion that one seeks refuge after the completion of recitation, taking to the literal sense of this verse. They also stated that the reason for doing so would be to repress self-astonishment at the completion of an action of worship.

A second opinion voiced is that one seeks refuge before and after the recitation. However the famous, well-known opinion, which is the opinion of the majority is that one seeks refuge before recitation in order to safeguard oneself from the whisperings of *Shayṭān*.[2] This group understood the meaning of the verse to be, 'When you wish to read the Qur'ān...' in the same sense as the verse,

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى ٱلصَّلَوٰةِ فَٱغْسِلُواْ
وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى ٱلْمَرَافِقِ

«...When you intend to stand for prayer [lit: have stood for prayer]**, wash your faces and forearms...»**

[*al-Mā'idah* (5): 6]

Abū Dāwūd records on the authority of Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī that,

When the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) stood at night [for prayer, he would commence the prayer] by saying the *takbīr* and then saying, *"SubḥānakAllāhumma wa biḥamdika,*

[2] ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 32-33; ibn 'Ādil, vol. 1, pg. 81-86

> *wa tabārakasmuka, wa ta'ālā jadduka, wa lā ilāha ghayruk.*"[3] Then he would say, "*Lā ilāha illAllāh*"[4] three times, then he would say, "*Allāhu Akbar*" three times and then he would say, "*A'ūdhu billāhi as-Samī' al-'Alīm min ash-Shayṭāni-r-rajīm - min hamzihī wa nafkhihī wa nafthihī*"[5]

Abū Dāwūd reports on the authority of Nāfi' bin Jubayr; from his father who said,

> I saw the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) saying when he commenced the prayer, "*Allāhu akbar kabīra*"[6] three times, "*Alḥamdulillāhi kathīra*"[7] three times and "*SubḥānAllāhi bukratan wa aṣīla*"[8] three times. Then he said, "*Allāhumma innī a'ūdhubika min-ash-Shayṭāni-r-rajīm, min hamzihī wa nafkhihī wa nafathī*"[9]

---

[3] You are glorified O Allāh and praised! Your Name is Blessed; Your Majesty is Exalted and none has the right to be worshipped save You.

[4] There is none worthy of worship save You.

[5] I take refuge with Allāh, the All-Seeing, the All-Knowing from the accursed *Shayṭān*: from his madness, arrogance and poetry.
Abū Dāwūd [Eng. Trans. 1/198 #774] and at-Tirmidhī #242. It was declared ṣaḥīḥ by al-Albānī, *al-Irwā'* #341

[6] Allāh is the Greatest, very great

[7] Praise and thanks be to Allāh, again and again

[8] Glorified is Allāh, morning and evening

[9] O Allāh! I take refuge with You from *Shayṭān* - from his madness, arrogance and poetry.
Abū Dāwūd [Eng. Trans. 1/196 #763] and ibn Mājah #807. It has been ruled ḍa'īf with this wording by al-Albānī, *Ḍa'īf Abū Dāwūd* #160
However there is a ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth reported by ibn Mājah #808 on the authority of
=

ash-Shāfi'ī and Abū Ḥanīfah were of the opinion that that the wording of the *isti'ādha* should be, *'A'ūdhu billāhi min-ash-Shayṭāni-r-rajīm'* such that it conforms to the aforementioned verse in *Sūrah an-Naḥl.* Aḥmad said that it was most befitting to say, *'A'ūdhu billāhi min-ash-Shayṭāni-r-rajīm innahū huwa as-Samī'u-l-'Alīm'* such that the person combines the wording of the verse of *Sūrah an-Naḥl* and *Sūrah Fuṣṣilat.* Some of the Shāfi'īs said that one should say, *'A'ūdhu billāhi-s-Samī'i-l-'Alīm min ash-Shayṭāni-r-rajīm'* to conform to the ḥadīth of Abū Dāwūd and also to combine the wording of both verses.[10] It is best to use the wordings as reported by the authentic aḥādīth on this occasion.[11]

The majority of scholars are of the opinion that *isti'ādha* is recommended and not obligatory. However it is reported from 'Aṭā' ibn Abī Rabāḥ that it is obligatory to say it within the prayer and outside the prayer when one desires to recite the Book of Allāh. ar-Rāzī stated that the proof for this opinion was that the verse, ***"seek refuge with Allāh"*** is mentioned in the imperative, that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) persisted in uttering it throughout his life, and that it serves as a protective barrier from *Shayṭān* - therefore if an obligation can only be fulfilled by a particular means, that means also becomes an obligation.[12]

=

ibn Mas'ūd that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) used to say the above words of seeking refuge when he commenced the prayer. Refer to al-Albānī, *Irwā'*, vol. 2, pg. 55
As for the supplication, it is authentically reported in Muslim that it was said, without the repetitions, by one of the Companions in prayer upon which the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, "Wonderful for it [the supplication] is that the doors of heaven were opened for it."

[10] ar-Rāzī, vol. 1, pg. 68; ibn 'Ādil, vol. 1, pg. 79-81

[11] ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 34

[12] ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 34; ar-Rāzī, vol. 1, pg. 67; ibn 'Ādil, vol. 1, pg. 87-88

Isti'ādhah is for the recitation in prayer - this being the opinion of Abū Ḥanīfah and Muḥammad. As such it is to be said before one starts reciting *al-Fātiḥah*, and it is only said if one is reciting himself. In the eyes of others, such as Abū Yūsuf, *isti'ādhah* is for the prayer, and hence according to this, the one praying would state it, even if he himself was not himself reciting.[13]

Shaykh Mashhūr Ḥasan Salmān said,

> It is clear that *isti'ādhah* is legislated in every *rak'ah* [of prayer]. This is due to the generality of His saying,
>
> فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ ٱلْقُرْءَانَ فَٱسْتَعِذْ بِٱللَّهِ مِنَ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنِ ٱلرَّجِيمِ ﴿٩٨﴾
>
> **«When you wish to read the Qur'ān then seek refuge with Allāh from the accursed *Shayṭān*»**
>
> This is the most correct opinion of the Shāfi'ī school and declared to be the strongest opinion by ibn Ḥazm.[14]

2.3 The meaning of *Isti'ādhah*

al-Ḥāfiẓ ibn al-Qayyim, may Allāh have mercy upon him, explained the meaning of *a'ūdhu* (I take refuge) in a beautiful way. He said,

> Know that the verb *'ādha* and its derivatives carry the meaning of being careful and wary, guarding and fortifying, being rescued and victorious. Its essential meaning is to flee from that which you fear will harm you to that which will safeguard you from it. This is why the

[13] ar-Rāzī, vol. 1, pg. 68; ibn 'Ādil, vol. 1, pg. 89-90; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 34

[14] Mashhūr Ḥasan Salmān, *al-Qawl al-Mubīn fī Akhṭā'i al-Muṣallīn*, pg. 109. Refer also to an-Nawawī, *al-Majmū'*, vol. 3, pg. 270; al-Albānī, *Tamām al-Minnah*, pp. 176-177

one you seek refuge with is named *ma'ādh* and *malja'* (the source of refuge and recourse).

In the ḥadīth there occurs, 'When the daughter of al-Jawn entered upon the Prophet (ﷺ) [after their marriage] he moved his hand [to touch her] and she said, "I take refuge with Allāh from you." He said, "Indeed you have sought refuge with the *Ma'ādh*, return and rejoin your family." '[15]

Therefore the meaning of *a'ūdhū* is: I take refuge, guard myself and take precaution. There are two opinions concerning the basis of this verb. The first is that it is derived from the meaning of *as-satar*, covering or protection, and the second is that it is derived from the meaning of *luzūm al-mujāwara*, firmly adhering to that which adjoins it.[16] As for the first opinion then the Arabs used to say with regards to a house that is in the shade of a tree - *'uwwadha*. Therefore when this house did *'ādha* with this tree by being built under its shade the Arabs named it *'uwwadh*. The same applies to the one who takes refuge for he seeks protection and cover from his enemy with the one he seeks refuge with. As for the second opinion, then the Arabs used to say regarding flesh that was stuck to a bone and could not be removed, *'uwwadha,* because of its refusal to be dislodged from it. The same applies to the one taking refuge for he sticks firmly to the one he is seeking refuge with and refuses to be distanced. Both of these opinions are correct for seeking refuge includes both. The one taking refuge seeks protection with the one he is seeking refuge with and sticks firmly to him. His heart attaches itself to him and holds firm just as the child sticks close to its father when threatened by an enemy.

[15] Bukhārī [Eng. Trans. 7/181 #181, 182].

[16] ar-Rāzī, vol. 1, pg. 70; ibn 'Ādil, vol. 1, pg. 94

The same applies to the one taking refuge for he flees from his enemy who desires his destruction to his Lord, throwing himself between His hands, holding firmly to Him, sticking close to Him and resorting to Him. Now, know that the reality of seeking refuge that is established in the heart of the believer surpasses, and is beyond these descriptions, for these serve only as examples and representations. As for that which is established in the heart in its taking refuge, holding fast to, and its throwing itself before its Lord, its need of Him and its submission and humility before Him, then all of this is beyond description. In a similar vein, love of Him and fear of Him can only be described in a deficient way for they cannot truly be understood except through experiencing them. This is similar to the case of one trying to describe the pleasure of sexual intercourse to one who is impotent and feels no sexual urges. No matter how much you describe it and how many examples you give, never will he truly understand it. However if you were to describe it to one who does have these urges and has had intercourse then he will understand your descriptions completely. If it is asked: When one is commanded to take refuge with Allāh why does the form of the command carry a *sīn* and *ta*? For example in His saying,

فَٱسْتَعِذْ بِٱللَّهِ مِنَ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنِ ٱلرَّجِيمِ ﴿٩٨﴾

«Seek protection *(fasta'idh)* with Allāh from the accursed *Shayṭān*»

[*an-Naḥl* (16):98]

Yet one says, 'I take refuge' *(a'ūdhu)* and 'I took refuge' *(ta'awwadhtu)* without including the *sīn* and *ta*?

The reply is: the *sīn* and *ta* are grammatically used to denote a person's seeking something. Therefore when

one says, '*Asta'īdhu* with Allāh' he is saying, 'I seek refuge with Him.' When he says, '*Astaghfirullāh*' he is saying, 'I seek the forgiveness of Allāh.' However, when the person says, 'I take refuge *(a'ūdhu)* with Allāh' he is actually implementing and realising what he seeks because he sought refuge and protection with Allāh. There is a clear difference between actually taking refuge and seeking refuge. Therefore, because the one who is seeking refuge is actually recoursing to Allāh and holding firmly to Him, he says the verb that denotes this rather than saying the verb that denotes that he only seeks this.The opposite is true for the saying, '*Astaghfirullāh*' (I seek the forgiveness of Allāh) for in this case the person is asking Allāh to forgive him. Therefore when he says, '*Astaghfirullāh*' he is implementing what he desires because the meaning of this statement is, 'I ask Allāh that He forgive me.' This then is the best way of seeking refuge and it was for this reason that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to say, "I take refuge with Allāh from the accursed *Shayṭān*" and, "I take refuge with Allāh's perfect words" and, "I take refuge with the Might and Power of Allāh" saying, '*a'ūdhu*' rather than '*asta'īdhu.*' Indeed this is what Allāh taught him to say with His words,

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ ٱلْفَلَقِ ۝١

«Say: I take refuge with the Lord of Daybreak»
[*al-Falaq* (113):1]

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ ٱلنَّاسِ ۝١

«Say: I take refuge with the Lord of Mankind»
[*an-Nās* (114):1]

Employing the word '*a'ūdhu*' rather than '*asta'īdhu.*'[17]

[17] ibn al-Qayyim, *Badā'i al-Fawā'id*, vol. 1, pg. 439-441; *Tafsīr al-Qayyim*, pp. 538-541

2.4 Everyone is need of *isti'ādhah*

The order to take refuge is left general and as such it does not specify one set of people from another. Moreover the Messengers and Prophets would also do *isti'ādhah* and this further serves to prove that everybody is in need of this statement.

Nūḥ, peace be upon him, said,

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّيٓ أَعُوذُ بِكَ أَنْ أَسْـَٔلَكَ مَا لَيْسَ لِى بِهِۦ عِلْمٌ ۖ وَإِلَّا
تَغْفِرْ لِى وَتَرْحَمْنِىٓ أَكُن مِّنَ ٱلْخَٰسِرِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾

«My Lord! I take refuge with You from asking You for anything about which I have no knowledge»

[*Hūd* (11): 47]

for which he was honoured with two things, peace and blessings:

قِيلَ يَٰنُوحُ
ٱهْبِطْ بِسَلَٰمٍ مِّنَّا وَبَرَكَٰتٍ عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰٓ أُمَمٍ مِّمَّن مَّعَكَ ۚ

«It was said, 'Nūḥ, descend with peace from Us and with blessings on you and on the nations that will issue from those who are with you...'»

[*Hūd* (11): 48]

Yūsuf, peace be upon him, said,

مَعَاذَ ٱللَّهِ ۖ إِنَّهُۥ رَبِّىٓ أَحْسَنَ مَثْوَاىَ ۖ

«Allāh is my refuge! He is my lord and has been good to me where I live»

[*Yūsuf* (12): 23]

for which he was honoured with two things, evil and lust being averted from him:

كَذَٰلِكَ لِنَصْرِفَ عَنْهُ ٱلسُّوٓءَ وَٱلْفَحْشَآءَ

«That happened so we might avert from him all evil and lust»

[*Yūsuf* (12): 24]

Mūsā, peace be upon him, said,

أَعُوذُ بِٱللَّهِ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ ٱلْجَٰهِلِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾

«I take refuge with Allāh from being one of the ignorant!»

[*al-Baqarah* (2): 67]

for which he was honoured with two things, the lifting of the accusation and the bringing back to life of the dead person. He also said,

وَإِنِّى عُذْتُ بِرَبِّى وَرَبِّكُمْ أَن تَرْجُمُونِ ﴿٢٠﴾

«I have taken refuge with my Lord and your Lord against your stoning me»

[*ad-Dukhān* (44): 20]

وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰٓ إِنِّى عُذْتُ بِرَبِّى وَرَبِّكُم مِّن كُلِّ مُتَكَبِّرٍ
لَّا يُؤْمِنُ بِيَوْمِ ٱلْحِسَابِ ﴿٢٧﴾

«I take refuge in my Lord and your Lord from every proud man who does not have faith on the Day of Reckoning»

[*Ghāfir* (40): 27]

for which he was honoured with two things, the destruction of his enemy and his inheriting their lands and homes.

The mother of Maryam said,

وَإِنِّي سَمَّيْتُهَا مَرْيَمَ وَإِنِّيٓ أُعِيذُهَا بِكَ وَذُرِّيَّتَهَا مِنَ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنِ ٱلرَّجِيمِ ﴿٣٦﴾

«I have named her Maryam and placed her and her children in Your safekeeping from the accursed *Shayṭān*»

[*Āli 'Imrān* (3): 36]

for which she was honoured with two things:

فَتَقَبَّلَهَا رَبُّهَا بِقَبُولٍ حَسَنٍ وَأَنۢبَتَهَا نَبَاتًا حَسَنًا

«Her Lord accepted her with approval and made her grow in health and beauty»

[*Āli 'Imrān* (3): 37]

Maryam, when she saw the Angel, said,

قَالَتْ إِنِّيٓ أَعُوذُ بِٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ مِنكَ إِن كُنتَ تَقِيًّا ﴿١٨﴾

«I take refuge from you with the All-Merciful»

[*Maryam* (19): 18]

and was honoured with two things: a son without father, and a son who absolved her of the accusations against her while still in his cradle.[18]

[18] ar-Rāzī, vol. 1, pg. 77; ibn 'Ādil, vol. 1, pg. 105-106

2.5 The virtues of *isti'ādhah*

There are a number of texts showing us the virtue of *isti'ādhah*:

1. Bukhārī reports on the authority Sulaymān ibn Sarad that,

> Two men abused each other in the presence of the Prophet (ﷺ) while we were sitting with him. One of the two abused the other while in a state of rage, his face turned red. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "I know a statement that if he were to say, what he is experiencing would leave him. If only he were to say, 'I take refuge with Allāh from the accursed *Shayṭān*.' "[19]

2. Aḥmad reports on the authority Abū Dharr that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

> "O Abū Dharr! Take refuge with Allāh from the satans amongst men and jinn." I said, 'Are their satans amongst men?' He replied, "Yes."[20]

3. Abū Dāwūd reports on the authority ibn 'Abbās that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

> "If anyone seeks refuge with [you] for the sake of Allāh then grant him refuge. If any asks of you for the sake of Allāh then grant his request."[21]

[19] Bukhārī [Eng. Trans. 8/87 #136]

[20] Aḥmad [#21546, 21552]. The ḥadīth has two routes of narration both which are weak as mentioned by Muqbil bin Hādī, *Takhrīj ibn Kathīr*, vol. 1, pg. 98

[21] Abū Dāwūd [Eng. Trans. 3/1416 #5089]. as-Suyūṭī #8411 ruled it to be ḥasan and an-Nawawī, *Riyāḍ as-Ṣāliḥīn* #1732 said it was ṣaḥīḥ as did al-Albānī #6021, *as-Ṣaḥīḥah* #253

4. at-Tirmidhī records on the authority of Ma'qal bin Yasār that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

> "Whoever says, *'A'ūdhu billāhi-s-Samī'i-l-Alīm'* [one narration adds, *'mina-sh-Shaytāni-r-Rajīm'*] three times upon awaking and recites the last three verses of *Sūrah al-Ḥashr*, Allāh will appoint seventy thousand Angels over him to invoke blessings upon him until he goes to sleep. Were he to die on that day he would have died as a martyr. Whoever says this when he goes to sleep, the same holds true."[22]

5. Muslim records on the authority of 'Ā'ishah that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to say,

> "I take refuge with Your pleasure from Your dipleasure; I take refuge with Your forgiveness from Your punishment; I take refuge with You from You."[23]

Ibn al-Jawzī said,

> Know that the one who is taking refuge with Allāh, the Great, from the accursed *Shayṭān* has clung to the firm Rope of Allāh. I take refuge with Allāh from all sins and actions of transgression! I take refuge with Allāh from misguidance and treachery! I take refuge with Allāh from the Displeasure of *ar-Raḥmān*!
>
> O My brother! Know that when the servant clings to the rope of the created king he is saved from the evil of the

[22] at-Tirmidhī #2922 and Aḥmad #20306. at-Tirmidhī said it was ḥasan gharīb and in some texts gharīb and this seems most correct, al-Albānī #5732 ruled it ḍa'īf.

[23] Muslim #751

oppressors. Therefore it far more befitting and appropriate for the one who takes refuge with the Lord of the Universe from the accursed enemy, *Shayṭān*, that he be saved.[24]

2.6 The meaning of *Shayṭān*

It is said that the word *Shayṭān* is derived from *shaṭana* which means to be distanced, and indeed *Shayṭān* is far removed from any good whatsoever. It is also said that the name is derived from *shāṭa,* which means to burn because he is made from fire. Others said that both meanings are correct. However, the first meaning is most correct and is proven by the usage of the Arabs.[25]

Shayṭān is one of the Jinn as proven by His saying,

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ ٱسْجُدُوا۟
لِءَادَمَ فَسَجَدُوٓا۟ إِلَّآ إِبْلِيسَ كَانَ مِنَ ٱلْجِنِّ فَفَسَقَ عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِۦٓ

«When We said to the Angels, 'Prostrate yourselves to Ādam,' they prostrated with the exception of Iblīs. He was of the Jinn and wantonly deviated from his Lord's command»

[*al-Kahf* (18): 50]

as such he is made of fire,

وَخَلَقَ ٱلْجَآنَّ مِن مَّارِجٍ مِّن نَّارٍ ﴿١٥﴾

«...and He created Jinn from a fusion of fire»

[*ar-Raḥmān* (55): 15]

---

[24] Ibn al-Jawzī, pg. 26

[25] ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 35

and it was because of this that he refused to prostrate to Ādam saying,

قَالَ أَنَا۠ خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِى مِن نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُۥ مِن طِينٍ

«I am better than him, You created me from fire but You created him from clay»

[*Ṣād* (38):76]

قَالَ لَمْ أَكُن
لِّأَسْجُدَ لِبَشَرٍ خَلَقْتَهُۥ مِن صَلْصَٰلٍ مِّنْ حَمَإٍ مَّسْنُونٍ ﴿٣٣﴾

«I will not prostrate myself to a human being whom You have created from dried clay formed from fetid black mud»

[*al-Ḥijr* (15): 33]

ash- Shanqīṭī comments on this argument used by *Shayṭān* by saying,

> This analogy employed by Iblīs of his racial origin, which is fire, to that of Ādam, which is clay, and his deriving from this that he is better than Ādam and that it was not desired for him to prostrate to one who was lesser than he, despite the existence of a clear and unequivocal text, which is His saying, ***"Prostrate to Ādam"***, is called *fāsid al-i'tibār* according to the terminology of the scholars of *usūl*. Therefore, anyone who rejects a clear and unequivocal text of revelation due to analogy, his precedent for this lies with Iblīs.
>
> This analogy of Iblīs, may Allāh curse him, is false due to three reasons:

1) It is *fāsid al-i'tibār* due to its opposing the clear text as has just

preceded.

2) We do not accept that fire is better than clay, rather clay is better than fire. This is because the substance of fire is inconsistency, thoughtlessness, corruption and disintegration; whereas the substance of clay is composure and correction. If you want to understand the ability and excellence of clay, look to the resplendent garden and what it contains of delicious fruits, elegant flowers and fine scents, you will then come to know that clay is indeed better than fire.

3) Even if we were to accept, for the sake of argument, that fire is better than clay, this does not necessitate that Iblīs is better than Ādam. The excellence of the foundation does not necessitate the excellence of the off-shoot, rather it is possible that the foundation be exalted and the off-shoot be disgraced. The poet said,

If you were to boast about fathers who possess excellence
We would say: you have spoken truthfully, but how evil are their offspring![26]

2.7 Summary

So in summary, the statement means, 'I take refuge with Allāh, and no one else, from *Shayṭān* that he may harm me in my religion, or divert me away from a duty that Allāh has imposed upon me.'[27] It is an implicit ackowledgement of the power of Allāh and one's own weakness and inability to combat the unseen enemy, *Shayṭān*. If a person is killed by a physical enemy, he is a martyr; if he is killed by the unseen enemy, he is disavowed. If a person is overcome by a

[26] ash-Shanqīṭī, vol. 1, pg. 59-60

[27] at-Ṭabarī, vol. 1, pg. 76

physical enemy, he will be rewarded; if he is overcome by the unseen enemy, he will be put to severe trial. The servant cannot see *Shayṭān* but *Shayṭān* can see him, so he in turn takes refuge with One who can see *Shayṭān* and whom *Shayṭān* cannot see.[28]

Ibn al-Qayyim said,

> It is necessary to know that performing sins is detrimental and harmful to the servant. The harm that sins cause to the heart is comparable to the differing levels of harm that various types of poison cause to the body. Indeed is there a single evil that occurs in the world or will occur in the Hereafter except that its cause is sin?
>
> What caused our parents to be ejected from Paradise - the land of delight, felicity and joy - to the land of pain, misery and affliction?
>
> What caused Iblīs to be ejected from enjoying the company of the Angels to being debased and cursed? What caused his outward and inward form to be disfigured such that he took on the most vile of features and his inner features even worse? What caused him to become distant [from Allāh] after being close; from being a recipient of His mercy to being a recipeint of His curse; from being beautiful to being ugly; from being in Paradise to being condemned to the blazing Fire; from being a believer to being a disbeliever; from being the friend of Allāh to being His greatest enemy; from being a person devoted to the glorification of his Lord to being a person of *kufr*, *shirk*, lies and shameful deeds; from wearing the rainment of faith to wearing the rainment of disbelief, sin and disobedience causing him to become completely worthless and insignificant in the Sight

[28] ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 34

of Allāh? What caused him to become an outcast - despised and humiliated - such that he became a leader for every sinner and criminal? O Allāh we take refuge with You from opposing Your command and taking on board Your prohibition![29]

[29] ibn al-Qayyim, *ad-Dā' wa ad-Dwā'*, pp. 56-57

CHAPTER III

بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ ١

With the Name of Allāh, The All-Merciful, The Most Merciful

This statement is given the title *basmAllāh* as an abbreviation. In the same way the statement, *'Lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billāh'* is called the *ḥawqala*; *'Lā ilāha illā Allāh'* is called the *haylala*; *'Al-ḥamdulillāh'* is called the *ḥamdala*; *'SubḥānAllāh'* is called the *sabḥala*; *'Ḥayya 'alā as-Ṣalāh'* is called the *ḥay'ala*; and *'ḤasbunAllāh'* is called the *ḥasbala*.[1]

3.1 The wisdom of the *basmAllāh*

From the manners that Islām has taught us is to begin our actions by mentioning the Name of Allāh.[2] The purpose behind this is far-reaching and manifold:

1. It brings Allāh to mind before one does the action.

[1] ibn 'Ādil, vol. 1, pg. 116

[2] at-Ṭabarī, vol. 1, pg. 78

2. It prevents one from doing evil actions.

3. It aids one in attaining Allāh's support and succour in that action.

4. It reminds one of the purpose, the source of fulfilment, the source of blessings for that action and its final destination.[3]

Ibn al-Qayyim explained this final point further,

> Allāh, Exalted is He says,
>
> وَإِن مِّن شَيْءٍ إِلَّا عِندَنَا
>
> **«There is not a single thing except that its depositories and treasures are with Us»**
>
> [*al-Ḥijr* (15): 21]
>
> This verse comprises a [great] treasure from the treasures [of the Qur'ān], this being that nothing is sought except from the One who possesses its depositories and treasures, the One in whose hands lie the keys to these treasures. Seeking [things] from anyone else is seeking something from one who does not possess them or possess any authority over them.
>
> The saying of Allāh, Exalted is He,
>
> وَأَنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الْمُنتَهَىٰ
>
> **«...and that to your Lord is the final goal»**
>
> [*an-Najm* (53): 42]
>
> comprises an immense treasure, this being that every desired objective that is not desired for His sake and is not

[3] an-Nasafī, vol. 1, pg. 13; al-Baqā'ī, vol. 1, pg. 12; Ālūsī, vol. 1, pg. 90; ibn 'Uthaymīn, *Explanation of the Three Fundamental Principles of Islām*

connected [in any form or fashion] to Him is temporary and soon to disappear for its final goal is not with Him. The final goal lies only with the One to whom all matters find their conclusion, terminating at His creation, will, wisdom, and knowledge. Therefore He is the source of every desired matter.

Everything that is loved - if it is not loved for His sake then this love is nothing but distress and punishment. Every action that is not performed for His sake then it is wasted and severed. Every heart that does not reach Him is wretched and veiled from achieving its success and happiness.

Therefore Allāh has gathered everything that could be desired from Him in His saying,

وَإِن مِّن شَيْءٍ إِلَّا عِندَنَا

«There is not a single thing except that its depositories and treasures are with Us»

[*al-Ḥijr* (15): 21]

and He has gathered everything that is done for His sake in His saying,

وَأَنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ ٱلْمُنتَهَىٰ

«...and that to your Lord is the final goal»

[*an-Najm* (53): 42]

Therefore there is nothing beyond Allāh that deserves to be sought and nothing finds its conclusion with other than Him.

The ***ba*** (with) is known as the *ba* of *istiʿānah* or seeking help and support, meaning that the servant is seeking the aid of Allāh in the

action he is about to perform, thereby expressing his servitude to Him.[4]

3.2 Meaning of Allāh

"With the Name of Allāh" meaning I start with every name that belongs to Allāh, the Exalted. This is because the word 'name' is singular and in the genitive form and therefore it includes all of the Beautiful Names.[5]

"Allāh" He is the Lord, the One who is worshipped, the One deserving of being singled out for worship due to the Perfect Godly Attributes that He is described with.[6] Ibn 'Uthaymīn states,

> This is the Name of His from which all other Names follow on as occurs in His saying,
>
> الٓرۚ كِتَٰبٌ أَنزَلۡنَٰهُ إِلَيۡكَ لِتُخۡرِجَ ٱلنَّاسَ مِنَ ٱلظُّلُمَٰتِ
> إِلَى ٱلنُّورِ بِإِذۡنِ رَبِّهِمۡ إِلَىٰ صِرَٰطِ ٱلۡعَزِيزِ ٱلۡحَمِيدِ ١
> ٱللَّهِ ٱلَّذِي لَهُۥ مَا فِي ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَمَا فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِۗ
>
> **«*Alif Lām Rā.* This is a Book which We sent down to you in order that you might lead mankind out of darkness into the light by the permission of their Lord, to the Path of the All-Mighty, the one worthy of all praise: Allāh, to who belongs everything that**

[4] Abū Ḥayyān, vol. 1, pg. 126; al-Ālūsī, vol. 1, pp. 64-65; ibn 'Uthaymīn, *Explanation of the Three Fundamental Principles of Islām*

[5] as-Sa'dī

[6] at-Ṭabarī, vol. 1, pp. 82-83; as-Sa'dī

is in the heavens and the earth.»

[*Ibrāhīm* (14): 1-2]

So in this saying of Allāh, the Most High, the noun which is the name of the Majestic Lord, 'Allāh' is not a descriptive attribute, rather it is a word which follows as an explanation and clarification of what has preceded.[7]

at-Ṭabarī said,

'Allāh is derived from *al-ilāh*, the *hamzah* which is the *fa* of the noun has been removed and so the *lām*, which is the *'ayn* of the noun, meets with the *lām* which is additional and has a *sukūn* on it, hence this *lām* mixes with the other and becomes one with a *shaddah*. As regards the meaning of Allāh, it has been reported to us on the authority of 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās who said, "He is the One who everything takes as deity (*ilāh*) and is worshipped by every object of creation." He then quotes his isnād to al-Ḍaḥḥāk who said that 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās said, 'Allāh is the One possessing divinity (*dhū'l-ilāhiyyah*) and deserving worship (*'ubūdiyyah*) from all His creation.' He then said, 'If someone were to ask: what is the proof that *ulūhiyyah* is worship (*'ibādah*), and that the word *al-ilāh* means *al-ma'būd* (one who is worshipped), and that it follows the form *fa'ila yaf'alu*?' He said, 'The word *ta'alluh* is undoubtedly on the form *tafa''ul* deriving from *aliha ya'lahu* and the meaning of *aliha*, when spoken, is *'abada* (to worship). The verbal noun of this word has also been mentioned proving that the Arabs articulated it upon the form *fa'ila yaf'alu* without adding anything. Sufyān ibn Wakī' narrated to us; ...; that ibn 'Abbās recited,

[7] Ibn 'Uthaymīn, pg. 36

"...and abandon you and your *ilāha*?"[8]

> and said, "i.e. and your worship," and he said, "He was one who was worshipped and did not worship."' He also quoted another isnād to ibn 'Abbās where he said of this verse, 'Pharaoh was worshipped and did not worship,' and he quoted a similar narration from Mujāhid. Then he said, 'The opinion of ibn 'Abbās and Mujāhid clearly shows that the meaning of *aliha* is *'abada* and that the word *ilāha* is the verbal noun.' He then quoted a ḥadīth on the authority of Abū Sa'īd that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, "The mother of 'Īsā gave him to a scribe that he may teach him. The teacher said, 'Write *bismillāh*.' 'Īsā said, 'Do you know what Allāh is? He is the God of the gods (*ilāhu'l-āliha*).'"

Ibn al-Qayyim, may Allāh have mercy upon him, said,

> 'This Noble Name has ten characteristics in its physical wording that are specific to it,' he mentioned them and then said, 'as regards its specific characteristics with regards to meaning, the most knowledgeable of creation (ﷺ) said, "I cannot enumerate praise of You, You are as You have praised Yourself." How is it possible to enumerate the specificities of a Name, the object of which has every single perfection without restriction, who deserves all commendation and praise, all lauding and veneration, who possesses all magnificence and perfection, and all nobility and beauty? All goodness, beneficence, generosity, grace, and gifts belong to Him and come from Him. This Name is not mentioned over some-

---

[8] *al-A'rāf* (7): 127, i.e. ibn 'Abbās and Mujāhid read it with the reading *ilāha* as opposed to the more standard *āliha*. The full verse reads, "The ruling circle of Pharaoh's people said, 'Are you going to leave Mūsā and his people to cause corruption in the earth and abandon you and your *āliha*?'"

thing paltry except that it becomes plentiful, nor at a time of fear except that it removes it, nor at a time of hardship except that it lifts it, nor at a time of distress and worry except that it alleviates it, nor at a time of constraint except that it liberates it. No weak creature depends upon it except that it grants him strength, nor one undergoing humiliation except it grants him honour, nor one who is poor except that it leads him to richness, nor one who is left alone except that it grants him comfort, nor one who is overcome except that it aids him and supports him, nor one in a state of dire need except that it lifts his need, nor one who is run astray except that it draws him back. It is the Name through which hardship is removed, through which blessings descend, through which supplications are answered, through which the foot does not slip, through which evil is repressed and good is promoted. It is the Name through which the heavens and earth stand, because of which the heavenly scripture descended, the Messengers were sent, the legal laws legislated, the legal punishments established, and Jihād legislated. Through this Name is the creation divided into the felicitous and the wretched, and through it does the Undeniable Reality come to pass and the Final Convulsion occur. Because of it are the Scales erected, the Path laid out, and the Paradise and Hell made ready. Through it is the Lord of the worlds worshipped and praised, and to establish its rights were the Messengers sent. It is about it that the questions will be asked in the grave and on the Day of Resurrection. Because of it did the dispute arise and to it one goes for judgment. Love and hate is based on it. Felicitous is one who has come to know it and establish its right, wretched is one who is ignorant of it and leaves off its right. It is the core of the creation and the command and through it do both stand and become firm, and to it do they end. ...

> "Our Lord, You have not created this for nothing. Transcendent are You! Safeguard us from the punishment of the Fire."[9]'
>
> to the end of his words, may Allāh, the Exalted, have mercy upon him.[10]

The action that the servant intends to do has been omitted in the sentence in order to generalise the statement; hence no matter what the servant intends to do, the *basmAllāh* is applicable to it. When the servant wishes to do an action and says this statement, that action he is about to do is implied in the sentence, and we understand that the action is to come at the end of the sentence for two vital reasons:

1. To seek blessings by beginning with the name of Allāh.
2. To express the fact that the action is only for Allāh.

Therefore it is as if the servant is saying 'I seek the help of Allāh, with every Name of His, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful, in the particular action I am about to do.'[11]

[9] *Āli 'Imrān* (3): 191

[10] *Fatḥ al-Majid*, pg. 15

[11] an-Nasafī, vol. 1, pg. 13; Zamakhsharī, vol. 1, pg. 46; ash-Shawkānī, vol. 1, pg. 17; as-Sa'dī; ibn 'Uthaymīn, *Explanation of the Three Fundamental Principles of Islām*

3.3 Legal Rulings to do with the *BasmAllāh*

The scholars are agreed that the *basmAllāh* comprises part of the verse of *Sūrah an-Naml* wherein Allāh says,

قَالَتْ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا
ٱلْمَلَؤُا۟ إِنِّىٓ أُلْقِىَ إِلَىَّ كِتَٰبٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٢٩﴾ إِنَّهُۥ مِن سُلَيْمَٰنَ وَإِنَّهُۥ بِسْمِ
ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ ﴿٣٠﴾

«She said, 'O eminent ones, indeed to me has been delivered a noble letter. Indeed it is from Sulaymān and it [reads], "With the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful"'»

[*an-Naml* (27): 29-30]

However the scholars have differed as to whether or not this statement comprises a verse of the Qur'ān when it is found in the beginning of each *Sūrah* and they have fallen into four opinions:

1. That it is a verse of every *Sūrah* except *Sūrah at-Tawbah.*

This was the opinion of 'Abdullāh bin 'Abbās, ibn 'Umar, ibn Zubair, Abū Hurayrah, 'Aṭā', Ṭāwūs, Sa'īd bin Jubair, Makḥūl, az-Zuhrī, 'Abdullāh bin Mubārak, ash-Shāfi'ī, Aḥmad - in one of the narrations from him, Isḥāq bin Rahawayyah and Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim bin Sallām.

2. That it is not a verse of any *Sūrah* of the Qur'ān at all and that it is placed at the beginning of every *Sūrah* merely to distinguish it from another.

This was the opinion of Mālik, Abū Ḥanīfah and their compan-

ions. Abū Dāwūd records on the authority of ibn 'Abbās (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) that,

> The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) did not use to know the beginning and end of a *Sūrah* until ***"With the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful"*** was revealed.[12]

3. That it is a verse of *al-Fātiḥah* but not of any other *Sūrah* or it is part of the first verse of every *Sūrah*.

This is another opinion reported from ash-Shāfi'ī but it is *gharīb* (odd).

4. That it is an independent verse of the Qur'ān heading every *Sūrah* but not actually part of that *Sūrah*.

This is the opinion of Dāwūd and Aḥmad - in the second of the two narrations from him. Abū Bakr ar-Rāzī also relates this from Abū al-Ḥasan al-Karkhī and these two are from the greatest of the Ḥanafī scholars.

As regard to whether one should recite it loudly in prayer, the *fiqh* of this branches off from the difference mentioned above.

Those who follow the second and fourth opinions are not of the view that one recites it loudly. Indeed Mālik was of the opinion that one does not recite it at all, depending upon the literal sense of the following ḥadīth and its likes,

> The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) used to commence his prayer by saying the *takbīr* and reciting, ***"All praise and***

[12] Abū Dāwūd Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 202 #787. Ibn Kathīr said that its isnād was ṣaḥīḥ as did al-Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Abu Dāwūd* #707

> ***thanks are due to Allāh"***[13]

As for those who follow the first opinion, they fall into one of two opinions:

1. That one recites it loudly as it is a part of *al-Fātiḥah* and therefore it should be recited in the same way as the rest of the *Sūrah*.

This is the view of a group of the Ṣaḥābah, and a number of the scholars after them, from amongst them ash-Shāfi'ī.

al-Ḥākim reports on the authority of ibn 'Abbās (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) that,

> The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) recited, ***"With the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful"*** loudly.[14]

Bukhārī reports on the authority of Anas bin Mālik (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) that he said in reply to one who asked him about the recitation of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ),

> His recitation would be elongated, then he recited ***"With the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, Most Merciful"*** elongating *bismillāh*, elongating *ar-Raḥmān* and elongating *ar-Raḥīm*.[15]

---

[13] Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 258 #1005 on the authority of 'Ā'ishah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhā*).

[14] al-Ḥākim, #750, wherein he said that it was ṣaḥīḥ. However az-Zayla'ī, *Naṣb ar-Rāyah*, vol. 1, pg. 345, said that its isnād contains 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr ibn Ḥisān about whom 'Alī ibn al-Madīnī said, 'He used to fabricate aḥādīth.' adh-Dhahabī mentioned the same in his *Talkhīṣ*

[15] Bukhārī Eng. Trans., vol. 6, pg. 513 #566

Abū Dāwūd reports on the authority of Umm Salamah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhā*) that she said,

> The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) used to cut his recitation at each verse [pausing before going on to the next. He would recite], ***"With the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful"*** [then] ***"All praise and thanks are due to Allāh the Lord of the worlds"***, [then], ***"The All-Merciful, the Most Merciful"*** [then], ***"Master of the Day of Judgement"***[16]

2. That it is not to be recited loudly.

This is reported from the Prophet (ﷺ) by Bukhārī and Muslim, it is the view of a number of the Ṣaḥābah, and it is established from the Four *Khalīfs*. It is also the view of a group of the scholars after them from amongst them Abū Ḥanīfah, ath-Thawrī and Aḥmad.

Muslim records on the authority of 'Ā'ishah that

> The Prophet (ﷺ) would commence the prayer by saying the *takbīr* and reciting, ***"all praise and thanks are due to Allāh..."***[17]

Bukhārī and Muslim record on the authority of Anas who said,

> I prayed behind the Prophet (ﷺ) and Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān and 'Alī and they would all commence by reciting ***"All praise and thanks are due to Allāh..."***[18]

---

[16] Sunan Abū Dāwūd Eng. Trans., vol. 3, pp. 1120 #3990. ad-Dāruquṭnī said that it has a ṣaḥīḥ isnād and it was declared ṣaḥīḥ by al-Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Abū Dāwūd* #3379

[17] Muslim #606

[18] Bukhārī #701 and Muslim #768

So this is a summary of the views of the scholars with regards its recitation and they are all close to each other, and all praise is due to Allāh, for they are agreed that the prayer of the one who recites it loudly or silently is valid.[19]

3.4 The virtues of the *basmAllāh*

There are a number of texts explaining to us the virtue of the *basmAllāh*:

1. Imām Aḥmad reports on the authority of Abū Tamīmah who said,

> I was riding behind the Prophet (ﷺ) when his mount stumbled and so I said, 'May Satan perish!' Upon hearing this the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Do not say 'May Satan perish' for when you say this Satan becomes exultant and grows in stature and says, 'It was by my power that I injured him.' But when you say, 'With the Name of Allāh' he becomes humiliated and grows small until he ends up the size of a fly."[20]

2. Abū Dāwūd reports on the authority of Abū Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

> There is no *wuḍū'* for the one who does not [commence]

[19] ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pp. 36-37

[20] Abū Dāwūd Eng. Trans., vol. 3, pg. 1387 #4964; Aḥmad #20591, 20592, 20690, and the wording is his. It was declared ṣaḥīḥ by al-Ḥākim #7792, 7793, adh-Dhahabī, and al-Albānī #7401.

by mentioning the Name of Allāh.[21]

3. Bukhārī reports on the authority of ibn 'Abbās (*radiyAllāhu 'anhu*) that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

> If, when one of you wishes to go to his wife [for sexual intercourse], he says, 'With the Name of Allāh, O Allāh! Protect us from the Satan and keep the Satan away from what You will provide us.' Then if it is decreed that they should have a child out of that act, Satan will never be able to harm him.[22]

4. al-Khaṭīb reports on the authority of Abū Hurayrah (*radiyAllāhu 'anhu*) that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

> Every important matter that is not begun with, 'With the Name of Allāh' is deprived of good.[23]

---

[21] Abū Dāwūd Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 26 #101, and Aḥmad #9417. Ibn Ḥajr, *Natā'ij*, vol. 1, pg. 237, quotes ibn as-Ṣalāḥ ruling the ḥadīth to be ḥasan and himself, *Talkhīṣ*, vol. 1, pg. 75, says that it has strength when taking into consideration all its routes; it was declared ṣaḥīḥ by al-Albānī #7503.

Similar aḥādīth are recorded on the authority of Abū Sa'īd by Aḥmad #11370, 11371; Rabāḥ ibn 'Abdur-Raḥmān by Aḥmad, #16651; an unknown woman by Aḥmad #23236; the grandfather of Rabāḥ by Aḥmad #27145-27146; Sahl ibn Sa'd by ibn Mājah #400; the grandfather of 'Īsā ibn Sabrah by ad-Dūlābī, *al-Kunā wa-l-Asmā'*, vol. 1, pg. 36; and 'Ā'ishah by al-Bazzār #261

[22] Bukhārī Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 105 #143; Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 2, pg. 731 #3361

[23] as-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt ash-Shāfi'iyyah*, vol. 1, pg. 6, and others. al-Albānī ruled it to be ḍa'īf jiddan in *Irwā'* #1

The ḥadīth is also recorded with various other wordings in place of 'With the Name of Allāh' such as 'with the praise of Allāh' or 'With praise' or 'With the remembrance of Allāh' by ibn Mājah #1894, Abū Dāwūd #4840 and ad-Dāruquṭnī, pg. 85. al-Albānī, *al-Irwā'* #2 shows that it is ḍa'īf.

Ibn Mas'ūd said,

> Whosoever wishes to the saved from the nineteen Angels over Hellfire then let him recite, 'With the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful.'[24]

[24] as-Suyūṭī, vol. 1, pg. 30

CHAPTER IV

ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ۝٢

All Praises and thanks are due to Allāh

4.1 The meaning of *ḥamd*

The meaning of *ḥamd* is praise and extolling arising from ones own volition, and from love and veneration of the praised. It also carries the meaning of *riḍā*, or contentment, and is the opposite of *dhamm*, or blame. Its meaning is more general and inclusive than that of *shukr*, or giving thanks, because it encompasses this as well as having the meaning of praise.[1] Furthermore *shukr* is only expressed as a response to a favour whereas *ḥamd* is expressed both as a response to a favour as well as a spontaneous action of *dhikr*. It is in this respect that ibn 'Abbās (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) said, '*al-Ḥamdulillāh* is the statement of gratitude.' 'Alī (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) said, 'It is a statement that Allāh chose to be directed to Himself and something that He loves.' Abū 'Abdur-Raḥmān al-Jabā'ī said, 'Prayer is gratitude, fasting is gratitude, any good that we do is gratitude, the

[1] al-Bayḍāwī, vol. 1, pg. 45; Qurṭubī, vol. 1, pg. 94; Abū Ḥayyān, vol. 1, pg. 130; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 44; ash-Shawkānī, vol. 1, pg. 19

most superior form of gratitude is to say, ***“All praise and thanks are due to Allāh”***.’[2]

Hence it is due to the comprehensiveness of this word that we find the Prophets showing gratitude in the Qur’ān by expressing *ḥamd*. Allāh commanded Nūḥ (*alayhi-salām*) saying,

فَإِذَا ٱسْتَوَيْتَ أَنتَ وَمَن مَّعَكَ عَلَى ٱلْفُلْكِ فَقُلِ ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ٱلَّذِى نَجَّىٰنَا
مِنَ ٱلْقَوْمِ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾

«...Say: All praises and thanks are due to Allāh Who saved us from an oppressive people»
[*al-Mu’minūn* (23): 28]

Ibrāhīm (*alayhi-salām*) said,

ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ٱلَّذِى وَهَبَ لِى
عَلَى ٱلْكِبَرِ إِسْمَٰعِيلَ وَإِسْحَٰقَ ۚ إِنَّ رَبِّى لَسَمِيعُ ٱلدُّعَآءِ ﴿٣٩﴾

«All praises and thanks are due to Allāh Who gave me Ismā‘īl and Isḥāq in my old age...»
[*Ibrāhīm* (14): 39]

Dāwūd (*alayhi-salām*) and Sulaymān (*alayhi-salām*) said,

ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ٱلَّذِى فَضَّلَنَا عَلَىٰ كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ عِبَادِهِ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٥﴾

«All praises and thanks are due to Allāh Who has preferred us above many of His believing servants»
[*an-Naml* (27): 15]

Allāh commanded our Prophet (ﷺ) saying,

---

[2] ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 44; as-Suyūṭī, vol. 1, pg. 34

وَقُلِ ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ٱلَّذِى لَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا

«Say: All praise and thanks are due to Allāh Who has not begotten a son...»

[*al-Isrā'* (17): 111]

The People of Paradise will say,

وَقَالُوا۟ ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَذْهَبَ عَنَّا ٱلْحَزَنَ

«All praises and thanks are due to Allāh Who has removed from us all grief»

[*Fāṭir* (35): 34]

وَءَاخِرُ دَعْوَىٰهُمْ أَنِ ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ ٱلْعَـٰلَمِينَ ﴿١٠﴾

«And the close of their supplication will be: All praises and thanks are due to Allāh, the Lord of the Universe»

[*Yūnus* (10): 10]

It is for this reason that the word *ḥamd* has been employed in this verse of *al-Fātiḥah.*

Some of the scholars said that *shukr* is more encompassing than *ḥamd* because praise is expressed by the tongue whereas *shukr* can be expressed by the tongue, heart and limbs. *Shukr* with the tongue is done by praising the Bestower of blessings; *shukr* by the limbs is done by acting in obedience to Him and abandoning actions of disobedience; *shukr* in the heart is done by recognising the magnitude of the blessing and knowing that it has been given by the grace of Allāh and not by the servants own merit.

Both opinions are correct in their own place: *ḥamd* is more general with respect to when it is done and *shukr* is more general with respect to how it is done.[3]

4.2 The import of *ḥamd*

In the verse the word *ḥamd* has been preceded by the definite article, *al*, the reason for this is to include all the different manners of praise and specify them to Him, and it is an extolling with which Allāh has praised Himself and ordered His servants to praise Him with. This meaning is further expressed in the ḥadīth in which the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

> O Allāh! To You belongs all praise and thanks in its entirety, to You belongs the dominion in its entirety, in Your hand is all goodness in its entirety and to You returns the affair in its entirety.[4]

Allāh, Exalted is He says,

[3] al-Bayḍāwī, vol. 1, pg. 44; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 44. See also al-Baghawī, *Sharḥ as-Sunnah*, vol. 1, pp. 51-52

[4] ibn Abī ad-Dunyā, *adh-Dhikr* on the authority of Anas. al-Albānī, *Ḍa'īf at-Targhīb* #963 ruled it to be ḍa'īf

Similar aḥādīth are recorded by al-Bayhaqī #4399, 4400, on the authority of Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqās and Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī; Aḥmad #23355, on the authority of Hudhayfah with a ḍa'īf isnād; al-Marwazī, *Kitāb as-Ṣalah*, on the authority of Abū Hurayrah. al-Albānī, *Ḍa'īf at-Targhīb* #964 ruled the ḥadīth of Abū Sa'īd to be mawḍū' and the ḥadīth of Sa'd which mentions the first and last line as ḥasan in *Ṣaḥīḥ at-Targhīb* #1576.

وَلَهُۥ مَا فِى ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ
وَٱلْأَرْضِ وَلَهُ ٱلدِّينُ وَاصِبًا أَفَغَيْرَ ٱللَّهِ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَمَا بِكُم مِّن
نِّعْمَةٍ فَمِنَ ٱللَّهِ ثُمَّ إِذَا مَسَّكُمُ ٱلضُّرُّ فَإِلَيْهِ تَجْـَٔرُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

«Everything in the heavens and earth belongs to Him, and the religion belongs to Him, firmly and forever. So why do you fear anyone other than Allāh? Any blessing you have is from Allāh...»

[*an-Naḥl* (16): 52-53]

Therefore by saying *al-Ḥamdulillāh*, the servant is praising and thanking Allāh Alone due to His greatness, unity, perfection, His Beautiful Names and Attributes and His innumerable favours and blessings that none can encompass save He. It is indeed an amazing statement that encompasses something that volumes would be unable to express and created intellects unable to enumerate! All praise belongs to Allāh![5]

There is no mention in this verse of the adverb denoting when this praise is said (*ẓarf az-zamān*) or from where this praise comes from (*ẓarf al-makān*). However in *Sūrah Rūm* there is mention that from amongst the 'where's' are the heavens and the earth - in His saying,

وَلَهُ ٱلْحَمْدُ فِى ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ

«And His is all praise and thanks in the heavens and the earth»

[*Rūm* (30): 18]

and in *Sūrah Qaṣaṣ* there is mention that from amongst the 'when's'

---

[5] al-Bayḍāwī, vol. 1, pg. 50; al-Qurṭubī, vol. 1, pp. 93-94; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 45; al-Ālūsī, vol. 1, pg. 99; ash-Shanqīṭī, vol. 1, pg. 31

are in this world and in the Hereafter,

وَهُوَ ٱللَّهُ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ لَهُ
ٱلْحَمْدُ فِى ٱلْأُولَىٰ وَٱلْءَاخِرَةِ وَلَهُ ٱلْحُكْمُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

«And He is Allāh, none has the right to be worshipped besides Him. To Him belongs all praise in the beginning [this world] and in the end [the Hereafter]...»

[*Qaṣaṣ* (28): 70]

and He said in the beginning of *Sūrah Saba'*,

لَهُ ٱلْحَمْدُ فِى ٱلْءَاخِرَةِ وَهُوَ ٱلْحَكِيمُ ٱلْخَبِيرُ ﴿١﴾

«His is all the praise in the Hereafter, and He is the All-Wise, All-Aware»

[*Saba'* (34): 1][6]

4.3 The virtues of *ḥamd*

There are a number of aḥādīth that show us the great virtue of expressing *ḥamd*:

1. Muslim records on the authority of Anas bin Mālik (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

   Indeed Allāh is pleased at His servant when he eats some food and praises Him for it or when he drinks a drink and praises Him for it.[7]

[6] ash-Shanqīṭī, vol. 1, pg. 31

[7] Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 4, pg. 1429 #6592

al-Ḥasan said, 'There is no blessing except that [saying] *al-Ḥamdulillāh* is better and more virtuous than it.'

2. Ibn Mājah records on the authority of Anas bin Mālik (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

> Allāh does not grant a servant a favour for which he says *al-Ḥamdulillāh* except that what he offered [of praising] is better and more virtuous than what he took [of the favour].[8]

al-Bayhaqī commented on this by saying,

> This is because the servant does not attain [the station] of praising and thanking Allāh except by His divine accord. Therefore the greater excellence [of his praising Allāh as compared to the initial blessing that Allāh bestowed upon him] is by virtue of his being blessed with the [ability to] praise Allāh and extol him and this did not exist in the initial blessing.[9]

3. al-Ḥakīm at-Tirmidhī, *Nawādir al-Usūl* records from Anas bin Mālik that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

> If the entire world along with its contents were to be in the hand of a man from my nation and then he were to say *al-Ḥamdulillāh*, this statement would be better than

[8] Ibn Mājah #3805 and it was declared ḥasan by al-Buṣayrī, *az-Zawā'id*, as-Suyūṭī, vol. 1, pg. 34, and ṣaḥīḥ by al-Albānī, #5563

A similar ḥadīth is recorded by at-Ṭabarānī, *al-Kabīr* #7794 on the authority of Abū Umāmah and declared ḍa'īf by as-Suyūṭī, #7841, and ḍa'īf jiddan by al-Albānī, *ad-Ḍa'īfah* #2011 due to the presence of a rejected additional wording.

[9] as-Sindī #3795

[what his hand contained].[10]

al-Qurṭubī commented upon this by saying,

> In our view the meaning is that he has been given the world, then after this he has been given this statement and utters it. Therefore this statement is better than the world because the world is soon to perish whereas the statement will endure for it is from those righteous deeds that remain. Allāh said,
>
> وَٱلْبَٰقِيَٰتُ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتُ خَيْرٌ عِندَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ مَّرَدًّا ﴿٧٦﴾
>
> **«The righteous deeds that last are better in the Sight of your Lord, for reward and better for resort»**
>
> [*Maryam* (19): 76]

4. Ibn Mājah records on the authority of ibn 'Umar that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

> A servant from amongst the servants of Allāh said. 'O my Lord! To You belongs all praise and thanks as is required by the magnificence of Your face and greatness of Your authority.' This confused the two [recording] Angels and they did not know how to record it. So they ascended to Paradise and said, 'O our Lord! Your servant has said a statement and we do not know how to record it.' Allāh, the Mighty and Magnificent asks, despite the fact that He already knows, 'What did my servant say?' They reply, 'O Lord! He said: O my Lord! To You belongs all praise and thanks as is required by the

---

[10] as-Suyūṭī, vol. 1, pg. 34-35, and ibn 'Asākir. as-Suyūṭī #7398, ruled it to be ḍa'īf and al-Albānī #4800, *ad-Ḍa'īfah* #875 ruled it to be mawḍū'.

A similar ḥadīth has been recorded on the authority of Jābir by al-Qārī', *Muntakhab al-Fawā'id*, and ruled ḍa'īf by al-Albānī, *ad-Ḍa'īfah* #876

> magnificence of Your face and greatness of Your authority.' Allāh then says to them, 'Record it for my servant as he said it, then when He meets Me, I will reward him for it.'[11]

5. Muslim records on the authority of Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

> Purity is half of faith, [the statement] *al-Ḥamdulillāh* fills the scales and [the statement] *SubḥānAllāh wa-l-Ḥamdulillāh* fills what is between the heaven and the earth.[12]

6. at-Tirmidhī records on the authority of Jābir bin 'Abdullāh that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

> The most excellent *dhikr* is [the statement] *lā ilāha illAllāh* and the most excellent supplication is [the statement] *al-Ḥamdulillāh*.[13]

7. Aḥmad records on the authority of Aswad bin Sarī' who said,

> I asked the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ), "Should I not recite to you words of praise that I praised my Lord, Blessed and Exalted is He, with?" He replied, "Of course! In-

---

[11] Ibn Mājah #3801, and al-Bayhaqī #4387. al-Būṣayrī, *az-Zawā'id* said, 'Its isnād contains Qudāmah ibn Ibrāhīm whom ibn Ḥibbān mentioned in *ath-Thiqāt*. It also contains Ṣadaqah ibn Bashīr and I have seen no one who disparaged him or authenticated him.' al-Albānī #1877, ruled it to be ḍa'īf.

[12] Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 147 #432

[13] at-Tirmidhī #3623 and ibn Mājah #3800. It was declared ṣaḥīḥ by al-Ḥākim #1834, 1852, with adh-Dhahabī agreeing, and as-Suyūṭī #1253; and ḥasan by at-Tirmidhī and al-Albānī #1104

deed your Lord loves praise."[14]

8. Muslim records on the authority of Samurah bin Jundub that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

> The most beloved statements to Allāh are four: *SubḥānAllāh*, *al-Ḥamdulillāh*, *Lā ilāha illAllāh*, *Allāhu Akbar*...[15]

4.4 The meaning of *Rabb*

Linguistically the word *rabb* means master, owner, one who grants grace, one who sets about correcting and purifying, and one who nurtures and cultivates. It is said that the latter meaning is the core meaning of the word and the other meanings stem from it.[16] When used in a possessive or conjunctive (*iḍāfah*) structure it can be applied to other than Allāh, for example it is said *rabb ad-dār*, or the master of the house, similarly in the Qur'ān it is mentioned that Yūsuf (peace be upon him) said to one of the inmates of prison,

اذْكُرْنِي عِندَ رَبِّكَ

«Mention me in the presence of your master»

[*Yūsuf* (12): 42]

Likewise it is mentioned in the famous ḥadīth of Jibrīl, when the Prophet (ﷺ) listed some of the signs of the Hour,

---

[14] Aḥmad #15586, 15590, and Bukhārī, *Adab al-Mufrad* #859, 861, 868. al-Albānī, *as-Ṣaḥīḥah* #3179 said it was ṣaḥīḥ.

A similar ḥadīth is recorded by Aḥmad #3616 on the authority of ibn Mas'ūd.

[15] Muslim #2137

[16] al-Baghawī, vol. 1, pg. 52; Abū Ḥayyān, vol. 1, pg. 130; al-Ālūsī, vol. 1, pg. 104

> ...when the slave-girl gives birth to her master (*rabbatahā*)[17]

However the word *ar-Rabb* can only ever be applied to Allāh.[18] It is one of the Names of Allāh and means the One who nurtures and sustains all of His servants through regulating the affairs and granting all types of favours and blessings. More specifically He is the One who nurtures and sustains his sincere friends by correcting and purifying their hearts, souls and manners. This is why their supplications are frequently made with this Noble Name because they seek this specific nurturing.[19]

as-Sa'dī said,

> The Lord is the One who nourishes and sustains the whole of the creation, meaning everything aside from Allāh, by the very fact of His creating them, His preparing for them all that they need and His favouring them with great blessings which if removed would also remove any possibility of the creation surviving. Therefore every blessing they possess is from Him, Exalted is He.
>
> His sustaining His creation is of two types: General and Specific. As for the general, it is His creating the creation, granting them provisions and guiding them to that which would benefit them in order to have them survive in this world. As for the specific, it is His sustaining His friends with faith and making them conform to it, perfecting and completing it for them, repressing all that

[17] Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 1 #1

[18] al-Qurṭubī, vol. 1, pg. 96; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 45; ash-Shawkānī, vol. 1, pg. 21; al-Ālūsī, vol. 1, pg. 105

[19] as-Sa'dī, pg. 16

> would make them turn away from it, bridling any hindering factors that may be set up between them and Him, and safe-guarding them from all evil. It is possible that the reason behind the fact that most of the supplications made by the Prophets employed the word 'Lord' was due to it carrying this meaning, for indeed all of the things they desired through their supplications fell under His Specific Lordship.[20]

4.5 The meaning of *'Alamīn*

There is some difference concerning the meaning of the word *'ālamīn*. It is the plural of *'ālam* which is itself a plural - it has no singular. al-Farā' and Abū 'Ubaydah said,

> *al-'ālam* is a term referring to anything that possesses an intellect and these fall into four categories: Mankind, Jinn, Angels and Satans. The term *'ālam* does not refer to the animal kingdom because this plural refers to those who possess an intellect specifically.

It is also said that it refers to every race or species of creation and to each generation of that race as stated by Qatādah and at-Ṭabarī. Therefore mankind is an *'ālam* and likewise every individual race amongst them would be an *'ālam* also, just as each generation of that race would be an *'ālam*. Similarly the Jinn are an *'ālam* etc...

Some of the scholars stated that *al-'ālam* is derived from *al-'allāmah* or sign because the existence of the world is a sign, without doubt, of the existence of its Creator who is described with perfect and magnificent Attributes. Allāh, Exalted is He said,

---

[20] as-Sa'dī, pg. 22

إِنَّ فِي
خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ
لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٩٠﴾

«Indeed in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the change of the night and day are signs (*āyāt*) for the people of understanding»

[*Āli ʿImrān* (3): 190]

and in the language *āyah* means *ʿallāmah*.[21]

However in another place in the Qur'ān, Allāh Himself has indicated its meaning,

قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَا رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ
﴿٢٣﴾ قَالَ رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِن كُنتُم مُّوقِنِينَ

«Pharaoh said: and what is the Lord of the *ʿālamīn*? He (Moses) said: the Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between them»

[*ash-Shuʿarā* (26): 23-24]

and therefore the most correct view is that it refers to all that is in existence besides Allāh.[22]

Qatādah said,

> *al-ʿālamūn* is the plural of *ʿālam* and it refers to everything

---

[21] al-Baghawī, vol. 1, pg. 52; Abū Ḥayyān, vol. 1, pg. 130; ash-Shawkānī, vol. 1, pg. 21; ash-Shanqīṭī, vol. 1, pg. 31

[22] ibn ʿAṭiyyah, vol. 1, pg. 67; al-Qurṭubī, vol. 1, pg. 97; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 46; al-Khāzin, vol. 1, pg. 15

in existence besides Allāh.

Ibn 'Abbās (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhuma*) said in explanation to this verse of *al-Fātiḥah*,

> All praise and thanks are due to Allāh, to whom belongs the creation in its entirety, the heavens and the earth and whosoever is in them and whatsoever is between them - that which is known and unknown.[23]

4.6 Summary

When one says, ***"All praise and thanks are due to Allāh"*** he is affirming that Allāh deserves to be praised simply because He is Allāh, due to His perfection and beautiful Names and Attributes. When one says, ***"Lord of the worlds"*** he is affirming that Allāh also deserves to be praised for His nurturing and sustaining us, for the many blessings He has granted us, and His governance of our affairs. By mentioning ***"worlds"*** the servant is drawn to ponder the fact that the existence of these worlds prove without doubt the existence of the Creator.[24] Furthermore the servant realises that this religion of Islām is a universal religion and not restricted to one race or nation for Allāh is the ***"Lord of the worlds"***. Moreover we learn that He Alone is the Creator and that all affairs are under His disposition, just as are all blessings. He is completely Self-Sufficient and the creation is in total need of Him Alone for everything, this then engenders awe and dread of Him, Glorious is He.

Another essential point that we learn from this verse, essential to our understanding of *Tawḥīd*, is that the Lord, Blessed and Ex-

[23] at-Ṭabarī, vol. 1, pg. 92; as-Suyūṭī, vol. 1, pg. 36

[24] al-Baqā'ī, vol. 1, pg. 14

alted is He, is distinct from His creation and not everywhere.[25]

This is an issue which the *Salaf* of this nation were unanimously agreed upon and is clearly proven by a multitude of texts from the Book and Sunnah.

[25] ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārij as-Sālikīn*, vol. 1, pg. 84

CHAPTER V

ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ ۝٣

The All-Merciful (*ar-Raḥmān*), The Most Merciful (*ar-Raḥīm*)

These are two descriptions of Allāh, Exalted is He, and two of the Names from amongst His Beautiful Names derived from *ar-raḥma* (mercy) in a way to express intense meanings.

5.1 The meaning of *ar-Raḥmān* and *ar-Raḥīm*

These two names express different aspects of mercy: *ar-Raḥmān* being upon the *wazn* of *fa'lān* indicates the predominance of that quality as well as its being replete. *ar-Raḥim* being upon the *wazn* of *fa'īl* indicates the repetitiveness of that quality as well as its occurrence on the intended object. It is for this reason that some scholars said that *ar-Raḥmān* was a Name pointing to the Attribute of the Essence of Allāh and *ar-Raḥīm* was a Name pointing to the Attribute of Deed.

Ibn al-Qayyim said,

'*al-Raḥmān* points to an Attribute that is existent in Him, Transcendent is He, and *al-Raḥīm* points to its interaction with the recipient of mercy. If you wish to understand this, ponder carefully His saying,

وَكَانَ بِٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَحِيمًا ﴿٤٣﴾

«He is Most Merciful to the believers.»[1]

ٱلرَّحْمَٰنُ عَلَى ٱلْعَرْشِ ٱسْتَوَىٰ ﴿٥﴾

«The All-Merciful rose over the Throne.»[2]

for not once is it mentioned that he is *Raḥmān* with them. This proves that *ar-Raḥmān* refers to one who is described with mercy whereas *ar-Raḥīm* is One who shows mercy.'[3]

Others said that *ar-Raḥmān* was more intense than *ar-Raḥīm* in meaning.[4] *ar-Raḥmān* is the one endowed with Mercy that extends to all of the creations in this world and to the believers in the Hereafter. *ar-Raḥīm* on the other hand is the One endowed with Mercy that extends to only the believers on the Day of Judgement - this being the understanding of the majority of the scholars. The narration reported from 'Īsā, as mentioned by ibn Kathīr and others, also indicates this - that he (upon him and our Prophet be peace and blessings) said,

ar-Raḥmān: the One who shows mercy in this world and

[1] *al-Aḥzāb* (33): 43

[2] *Ṭā Hā* (20): 5

[3] Ibn al-Qayyim, *Badā'i al-Fawā'id*, vol. 1, pg. 24

[4] Abū Ḥayyān, vol. 1, pg. 128

the Hereafter. *ar-Raḥīm*: the One who shows mercy in the Hereafter.[5]

Allāh the Exalted also points to what we have mentioned when He said,

ثُمَّ ٱسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى ٱلْعَرْشِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنُ

«Then He rose over the Throne, *ar-Raḥmān*»

[*al-Furqān* (25): 59]

ٱلرَّحْمَٰنُ عَلَى ٱلْعَرْشِ ٱسْتَوَىٰ ﴿٥﴾

«*ar-Raḥmān* rose over the Throne»

[*Ṭā Hā* (20): 5]

So he mentioned the *istawā* (Rising over the Throne) with His Name, *ar-Raḥmān*, so as to embrace the whole of His creation with his mercy as was stated by ibn Kathīr. Likewise is His saying,

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا۟ إِلَى ٱلطَّيْرِ فَوْقَهُمْ صَٰٓفَّٰتٍ وَيَقْبِضْنَ ۚ مَا يُمْسِكُهُنَّ إِلَّا ٱلرَّحْمَٰنُ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍۭ بَصِيرٌ ﴿١٩﴾

«Do they not see the birds above them, spreading out their wings and folding them in? None upholds them except *ar-Raḥmān*»

[*al-Mulk* (67): 19]

meaning: from his mercy to His creation is his kindness to the birds and His holding them in the sky while they are spreading out their wings and folding them in. From the clearest evidences pertaining to this is His saying,

[5] at-Ṭabarī, vol. 1, pg. 84

ٱلرَّحْمَٰنُ ﴿١﴾ عَلَّمَ ٱلْقُرْءَانَ ﴿٢﴾ خَلَقَ ٱلْإِنسَٰنَ ﴿٣﴾
عَلَّمَهُ ٱلْبَيَانَ ﴿٤﴾ ٱلشَّمْسُ وَٱلْقَمَرُ بِحُسْبَانٍ ﴿٥﴾ وَٱلنَّجْمُ
وَٱلشَّجَرُ يَسْجُدَانِ ﴿٦﴾ وَٱلسَّمَآءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ ٱلْمِيزَانَ
﴿٧﴾ أَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِى ٱلْمِيزَانِ ﴿٨﴾ وَأَقِيمُوا ٱلْوَزْنَ بِٱلْقِسْطِ
وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا ٱلْمِيزَانَ ﴿٩﴾ وَٱلْأَرْضَ وَضَعَهَا لِلْأَنَامِ ﴿١٠﴾
فِيهَا فَٰكِهَةٌ وَٱلنَّخْلُ ذَاتُ ٱلْأَكْمَامِ ﴿١١﴾ وَٱلْحَبُّ ذُو ٱلْعَصْفِ
وَٱلرَّيْحَانُ ﴿١٢﴾ فَبِأَىِّ ءَالَآءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿١٣﴾

«*ar-Raḥmān*. He taught the Qur'ān... so which of the favours of your Lord will you two deny?»
[*ar-Raḥmān* (55): 1-13]

Allāh, Exalted is He says,

وَكَانَ بِٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَحِيمًا ﴿٤٣﴾

«...and He is Ever Most Merciful (*raḥīm*) to the believers»
[*al-Aḥzāb* (33): 43]

and hence particularised His name *ar-Raḥīm* to them. So if it asked: 'how is it possible to reconcile what you have thusfar established with his (ﷺ) saying in the supplication,

> "The *Raḥmān* of the world and the Hereafter and the *Raḥīm* of them"?'[6]

[6] Reported by al-Ḥākim #1898, on the authority of 'Ā'ishah and he declared it ṣaḥīḥ. However adh-Dhahabī criticised this by saying, 'al-Ḥakam, its narrator, is not trustworthy and precise.' as-Suyūṭī, vol. 1, pg. 29, said the isnād was ḍa'īf and al-Mundhirī,
=

The obvious reply - and Allāh knows best - is that *ar-Raḥīm* is specific to the believers as we have mentioned, but it is not specified to them in the Hereafter alone, rather His Mercy to them is included in this world as well. So the meaning of 'the *Raḥīm* of them' would be 'His mercy to the believers in them'. The evidence that He is *Raḥīm* to the believers in this world as well as the Hereafter is that this is the literal meaning of His, the Exalted's saying,

هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَلِّي عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَلَائِكَتُهُ لِيُخْرِجَكُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ ۚ وَكَانَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَحِيمًا ﴿٤٣﴾

«He is the One who sends His blessings (*ṣalāh*) upon you, and His Angels so as to lead you out of the darkness to the light, and He is ever Most-Merciful (*raḥīm*) to the believers»

[*al-Aḥzāb* (33): 43]

because His *ṣalāh* upon them, the *ṣalāh* of His Angels and His leading them out of the darkness to the light is mercy to them in this world, even though it be the cause for mercy in the Hereafter as well. Similar to this in meaning is His saying,

لَّقَد تَّابَ اللَّهُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنصَارِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ فِي سَاعَةِ الْعُسْرَةِ مِن بَعْدِ مَا كَادَ يَزِيغُ قُلُوبُ فَرِيقٍ مِّنْهُمْ ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ إِنَّهُ بِهِمْ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١١٧﴾

«Allāh has forgiven the Prophet, the Muhājirūn and

=

Targhīb wat Tarhīb, vol. 2, pg. 616, said about this isnād, 'al-Ḥakam is abandoned, accused.' It is also recorded on the authority of 'Abdur-Raḥmān ibn Sābiṭ by ibn Abī Shaybah as per as-Suyūṭī, vol. 1, pg. 30

the Anṣār who followed him in the time of distress after the hearts of a group of them had nearly deviated [from the Right Path], but He accepted their repentance. Certainly He is Full of Kindness to them, Most Merciful (*raḥīm*)»

[*at-Tawbah* (9): 117]

for the mercy mentioned here is in connection to the event that befell the Prophet, the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār; moreover His forgiving them was mercy in this world even though it be the cause for mercy in the Hereafter as well. The knowledge of what is correct lies with Allāh.[7]

The Name, *ar-Raḥmān*, is one of the names unique to Allāh and it is not permissible to name any other with it. It is for this reason that Allāh, Exalted is He says,

قُلِ ٱدْعُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ أَوِ ٱدْعُوا۟ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنَ أَيًّا مَّا تَدْعُوا۟ فَلَهُ
ٱلْأَسْمَآءُ ٱلْحُسْنَىٰ

«Say, 'Call on Allāh or call on the All-Merciful, whichever you call upon, the Most Beautiful Names are His.'»

[*al-Isrā'* (17): 110]

وَسْـَٔلْ مَنْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ مِن رُّسُلِنَآ
أَجَعَلْنَا مِن دُونِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ءَالِهَةً يُعْبَدُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

«Ask those We sent before you as Our Messengers: Have We ever designated any gods to be worshipped besides the All-Merciful?»

---

[7] The above discussion is taken from ash-Shanqīṭī, vol. 1, pp. 31-32. See also ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pp. 41-42; ash-Shawkānī, vol. 1, pg. 18

[*az-Zukhruf* (43): 45][10]

5.2 The placing of this verse in the *Sūrah*

Ibn al-Qayyim, may Allāh have mercy upon him, said,

> 'His Name, Allāh, shows that he is taken as God and the object of worship; the creation take Him as their God by way of love, veneration, and submission; and they resort to Him to fulfil their needs and at times of calamity. This is what necessarily leads on from the perfection of His Lordship and mercy which in turn include the perfection of sovereignty and praise. His godship, lordship, mercy, and sovereignty necessarily lead on from all His Attributes of perfection since it is impossible to affirm this for one who is not living, hearing, seeing, powerful, speaking, doing as he pleases, and wise in his words and deeds. Therefore the Attributes of Majesty and Beauty relate to His Name, Allāh; and the Attributes of deed, power, singularity in bring harm and benefit, granting and withholding, implementing His will, and regulating the affairs of creation relate to His Name, *al-Rabb* (the Lord); and the Attributes of beneficence, generosity, granting gifts, tenderness, favouring, compassion, and kindness all relate to His Name, *al-Raḥmān*."[11]

In Allāh's mentioning His Names, *ar-Raḥmān* and *ar-Raḥīm*, after mentioning ***"Lord of the worlds"*** lies an example of encouragement following admonition such that the servant combines in himself a sense of dread as well as hope.[12] Examples of this method are

[10] al-Qurṭubī, vol. 1, pg. 75; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 42

[11] ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārij al-Sālikīn*, vol. 1, pg. 18

[12] al-Qurṭubī, vol. 1, pg. 98; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 47; ash-Shawkānī, vol. 1, pg. 21

abundant in the Qur'ān and Sunnah. For example His sayings,

نَبِّئۡ عِبَادِيٓ أَنِّيٓ أَنَا ٱلۡغَفُورُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَأَنَّ عَذَابِي
هُوَ ٱلۡعَذَابُ ٱلۡأَلِيمُ ﴿٥٠﴾

«Inform My servants that it is I Who is the Forgiving, the Merciful and that it is My punishment that is the painful torment»

[*al-Ḥijr* (15): 49-50]

غَافِرِ ٱلذَّنۢبِ وَقَابِلِ ٱلتَّوۡبِ شَدِيدِ ٱلۡعِقَابِ ذِي ٱلطَّوۡلِۖ

«The forgiver of sin, acceptor of repentance, severe in punishment, owner of Abundance»

[*Ghāfir* (40): 3]

Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiyAllāhu ʿanhu*) reports that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

> If the believers knew of the punishment of Allāh, none would hope to attain His Paradise. If the disbelievers knew the full extent of the Mercy of Allāh, none would despair of entering His Mercy.[13]

Moreover, after stating that Allāh is the Lord of the worlds, that He is their sustainer and nurturer, this verse proceeds to show that this sustaining and nurturing is not done because Allāh is in need of creation, but because of His mercy. Hence His Lordship is one of mercy and justice and not one of subjugation and oppression; he does not oppress his servants in the slightest, every punishment from Him arises from pure justice and every blessing arises from pure grace. Through believing that Allāh is All-Merciful, the serv-

---

[13] Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 4, pg. 1438 #6636

ant is encouraged to praise Allāh more.

This verse also serves to remind us that just as Allāh has nurtured and sustained us in the best of ways, granting us blessings after blessings, so too should we nurture and cultivate ourselves and those who are placed in our care, upon mercy and justice, using those self-same blessings Allāh has bestowed us. Just as Allāh is merciful, so too should we be merciful in nature and in deed,

> *ar-Raḥmān* shows mercy to the merciful. Have mercy on those who are on earth and the One who is above the heaven will have mercy on you.[14]

> Whoever is merciful, even when it comes to slaughtering a bird, Allāh will show him mercy on the Day of Judgment.[15,16]

---

[14] Abū Dāwūd #4941, at-Tirmidhī #1924, and Aḥmad #6494 on the authority of 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr. at-Tirmidhī said it was ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ and al-Albānī #3522, said it was ṣaḥīḥ.

Similar aḥādīth are recorded on the authority of 'Abdullāh ibn 'Amr by Aḥmad #6541, 7041; Abū Hurayrah by Bukhārī #5997; Jarīr ibn 'Abdullāh by Bukhārī #7376; Abū Sa'īd by Aḥmad, vol. 3, pg. 40; Jābir by ibn Abī Shaybah, vol. 8, pg. 529; ibn 'Umar by al-Bazzār #1952; 'Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn by al-Bazzār #1953; ibn Mas'ūd by at-Ṭabarānī, *al-Kabīr* #10277; and al-Ash'ath ibn Qays by at-Ṭabarānī, *al-Awsaṭ*.

[15] Bukhārī, *Adab al-Mufrad* #381. al-Haythamī, *Majma' az-Zawā'id*, vol. 4, pg. 33 said its narrators were trustworthy and precise and al-Albānī, *as-Ṣaḥīḥah* #27 declared the isnād ḥasan.

[16] al-Baqā'ī, vol. 1, pg. 14; Rashīd Riḍā, vol. 1, pp. 46-48

5.3 The repitition of *ar-Raḥmān* and *ar-Raḥīm*

Those who are of the opinion that, "With the Name of Allāh, the All-Merciful, the Most Merciful" is the first verse of *al-Fātiḥah* proceed to explain why it is that these two Names are repeated once again in the *Sūrah*.[17] Some said that the reason behind this was to emphasise the mercy of Allāh, but also pointed out that the very next verse tells us that we should not allow ourselves to be decieved into laxity and procrastination because Allāh is also the Master of the Day of Judgment.[18] In this emphasis of the mercy of Allāh lies a clear refutation of those, mainly amongst the Christians, who say that the Lord of the Muslims is an angry God and One who takes swift vengence, who further say that religion of Islām is one of fear and hatred.[19]

Others said that in the first mention of Allāh's mercy, the recipients of that mercy were not mentioned, hence the verse was repeated a second time to show who recieves this mercy, ***"the worlds"***[20] The reason why the mercy of Allāh is mentioned at the beginning of the *Sūrahs* of the Qur'ān is to show us that it is by the mercy and grace of Allāh that He has sent down to us this revelation, just as He says concerning the recipient of the revelation (ﷺ),

وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَٰكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَٰلَمِينَ

«We have not sent you except as a mercy to the worlds»

---

[17] al-Kirmānī, pg. 111

[18] al-Kirmānī, pg. 111; al-Khāzin, vol. 1, pg. 16; al-Ālūsī, vol. 1, pg. 110

[19] Rashīd Riḍā, vol. 1, pg. 67

[20] al-Kirmānī, pg. 110; al-Fairozabādī, vol. 1, pg. 130

[*al-Anbiyā'* (21): 107]

and to further show that he (ﷺ) has nothing to gain through the revelation and that his only duty is to convey.[21]

[21] Rashīd Riḍā, vol. 1, pp. 47, 66-67, who also mentions that the only chapter not to commence with the *basmAllāh* is *at-Tawbah*. The reason for this is that it was revealed with the sword and to unveil the machinations and thoughts of the hypocrites, so with respect to those it was sent down to unveil, it is more of a trial and tribulation than it is a mercy.

CHAPTER VI

مَٰلِكِ يَوْمِ ٱلدِّينِ ۝٤

Master of the Day of Judgement

6.1 The meaning of *Mālik*

The reciters have two different ways of reciting the first word of this verse, both of which have been reported via continuous (*mutawātir*) transmission from the Prophet (ﷺ) as well as Abū Bakr and 'Umar:[1]

1. Reciting it as *Malik*, or the King.

So the meaning of the verse would be that on that Day, kingship would belong to Allāh Alone and not to any of the creation who before then used to be kings on earth, vying with each other for power and dominion, exulting in what they had, pompously boasting about their grandeur and trying their best to outdo their competitors. However on that day they will come to know with certainty that in reality they are powerless, helpless and vulnerable and

[1] as mentioned by at-Tirmidhī; see also ibn 'Aṭiyyah, vol. 1, pg. 69 and as-Suyūṭī, vol. 1, pg. 38

that grandeur, power and authority belongs, in its entirety, to Allāh Alone. Allāh, Exalted is He says,

يَوْمَ هُم بَـٰرِزُونَ لَا يَخْفَىٰ
عَلَى ٱللَّهِ مِنْهُمْ شَىْءٌ لِّمَنِ ٱلْمُلْكُ ٱلْيَوْمَ لِلَّهِ ٱلْوَٰحِدِ ٱلْقَهَّارِ ﴿١٦﴾

«That Day when they will all come out, nothing of them will be hidden from Allāh. Whose is the kingdom this Day? It belongs to Allāh, the One, the Irresistible!»

[*Ghāfir* (40): 16]

2. Reciting it as *Mālik*, or the Owner.

So the meaning of the verse would be that on that Day, everything would belong to Him and no one else. No one will be able to voice an opinion or enforce a ruling as they used to do on this world. Allāh says,

يَوْمَ يَقُومُ ٱلرُّوحُ وَٱلْمَلَـٰٓئِكَةُ صَفًّا لَّا يَتَكَلَّمُونَ
إِلَّا مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ ٱلرَّحْمَـٰنُ وَقَالَ صَوَابًا ﴿٣٨﴾

«That Day on which the Spirit and the Angels will stand forth in rows, none shall speak except he whom the All-Merciful allows and he will speak only that which is correct and true»

[*an-Naba'a* (78): 38]

يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَّبِعُونَ ٱلدَّاعِىَ
لَا عِوَجَ لَهُۥ وَخَشَعَتِ ٱلْأَصْوَاتُ لِلرَّحْمَـٰنِ فَلَا تَسْمَعُ إِلَّا هَمْسًا

«...All voices will be humbled before the All-Merciful and nothing shall you hear but the low sound of

their footsteps»

[*Ṭā Hā* (20): 108]

وَلَا يَشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنِ ارْتَضَىٰ

«They cannot intercede except for one with whom He is pleased»

[*al-Anbiyā'* (21): 28]

Both recitations, of course, carry sound and good meanings. However it is possible to argue, as at-Ṭabarī does, that the first reading has the most comprehensive meaning as it is not possible to have sovereignty and kingship without possession, whereas there can be ownership without kingship. Similarly it is the king who will enjoin laws upon the owner as to how he should regulate his possessions. However ash-Shawkānī and ibn 'Aṭiyyah argue that both descriptions carry a meaning that is not found in the other. The *mālik* of property is able to dispose of his property as he wills whereas the *malik* will only be able to dispose of the *mālik's* property in a limited fashion. The *malik* is able to command the *mālik* to dispose of his property in a particular way that promotes the benefit of his kingdom, but the *mālik* is not able to command another *mālik* with the same.[2]

Allāh also says,

وَلَهُ الْمُلْكُ يَوْمَ يُنفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ

«His will be the kingdom on the Day that the trumpet is blown»

[*al-An'ām* (6): 73]

If it is asked: why did Allāh specify his kingship or ownership to the Last Day when it is known that these qualities always have and

[2] at-Ṭabarī, vol. 1, pp. 95-96; ibn 'Aṭiyyah, vol. 1, pg. 69; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 47; ash-Shawkānī, vol. 1, pg. 22

always will apply to Him?

The answer lies in the fact that on that Day the completeness and perfection of His kingship, justice and wisdom, just as it will become entirely clear that the sovereignty of the creation has been severed to the extent that the kings, ministers, slaves, and free-born will all stand on par with each other; all of them yielding to His greatness, rendered in complete submission to His magnificence, expectant of His recompense, hoping for His reward and fearing His punishment. His kingship has been emphasised by mentioning it in this context, otherwise He indeed is master of the Day of Judgment and all other days.[3]

It is important to note that there is no true Owner besides Allāh,

لِّلَّهِ مُلْكُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ۚ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ

«To Allāh belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth; He creates what He wills.»

[*ash-Shūrā* (42): 49]

قُل لِّلَّهِ ٱلشَّفَٰعَةُ جَمِيعًا ۖ لَّهُۥ مُلْكُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ۖ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

«...To Him belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. Then to Him you will be returned»

[*az-Zumar* (39): 44]

تَبَٰرَكَ ٱلَّذِى بِيَدِهِ ٱلْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١﴾

«Blessed is He in whose hand is the Kingdom! He

---

[3] al-Bayḍāwī, vol. 1, pg. 59; al-Qurṭubī, vol. 1, pg. 100; al-Khāzin, vol. 1, pg. 16; as-Sa'dī

has power over all things»

[*al-Mulk* (67): 1]

لَهُۥ مُلْكُ
ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ يُحْيِۦ وَيُمِيتُ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢﴾

«The kingdom of the heavens and the earth belongs to Him. He gives life and causes to die, and He has power over all things.»

[*al-Ḥadīd* (57): 2]

Allāh adduced the absence of ownership of those worshipped besides Him as proof that they did not deserve worship,

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا يَمْلِكُ لَهُمْ رِزْقًا مِّنَ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ
وَٱلْأَرْضِ شَيْـًٔا وَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ﴿٧٣﴾

«...and worship, instead of Allāh, things that have no control over their provision from the heavens or earth in any way, and are themselves completely impotent.»

[*an-Naḥl* (16): 73]

قُلْ أَتَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا
يَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا ۚ وَٱللَّهُ هُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْعَلِيمُ ﴿٧٦﴾

«Say: Do you worship, besides Allāh, something which has no power to harm or help you when Allāh is All-Hearing, the All-Knowing?»

[*al-Mā'idah* (5): 76]

قُلِ ادْعُوا الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُم مِّن دُونِ
اللَّهِ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَلَا فِي
الْأَرْضِ وَمَا لَهُمْ فِيهِمَا مِن شِرْكٍ وَمَا لَهُ مِنْهُم مِّن ظَهِيرٍ ﴿٢٢﴾

«Say: call on those you make claims for besides Allāh. They have no power over even the smallest particle either in the heavens or in the earth. They have no share in them and He has no need of their support.»

[*Saba'* (34): 22]

ذَٰلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ ۚ وَالَّذِينَ
تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِهِ مَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِن قِطْمِيرٍ ﴿١٣﴾

«That is Allāh, your Lord. The Kingdom is His. Those you call on besides Him have no power over even the smallest speck.»

[*Fāṭir* (35): 13]

There is also no true King besides Allāh, and therefore there is none who deserves absolute obedience save Allāh, and this obedience comes before the obedience of any other.

As for describing someone as *malik* or *mālik* then this is permissible for one who fulfils the requirements of the description, by way of metaphor.[4] In this sense is His saying,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ بَعَثَ لَكُمْ طَالُوتَ مَلِكًا ۚ

[4] al-Qurṭubī, vol. 1, pg. 99; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 48; al-Khāzin, vol. 1, pg. 16

«Indeed Allāh has sent you Saul as a king»
[*al-Baqarah* (2): 247]

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِۦ يَٰقَوْمِ ٱذْكُرُوا۟
نِعْمَةَ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَعَلَ فِيكُمْ أَنۢبِيَآءَ وَجَعَلَكُم مُّلُوكًا

«Moses said to his people: O my people! Remember the favour of Allāh upon you when He appointed amongst you prophets and made you kings»
[*al-Mā'idah* (5): 20]

Yet, we should beware of letting our ownership fool us into vainglory and boasting as was the case of Pharaoh,

وَنَادَىٰ فِرْعَوْنُ فِى قَوْمِهِۦ
قَالَ يَٰقَوْمِ أَلَيْسَ لِى مُلْكُ مِصْرَ وَهَٰذِهِ ٱلْأَنْهَٰرُ تَجْرِى مِن
تَحْتِىٓ ۖ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ أَمْ أَنَا۠ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ هَٰذَا ٱلَّذِى هُوَ مَهِينٌ
وَلَا يَكَادُ يُبِينُ ﴿٥٢﴾

«Pharaoh called to his people saying, 'My people, does the kingdom of Egypt not belong to me? Do not all these rivers flow under my control? Do you not see? Am I not better than this man who is contemptible and can scarcely make anything clear?'»
[*az-Zukhruf* (43): 51-52]

فَحَشَرَ فَنَادَىٰ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَقَالَ أَنَا۠ رَبُّكُمُ ٱلْأَعْلَىٰ ﴿٢٤﴾

«But then he rallied and called out, saying, 'I am your Lord Most High!'»
[*an-Nāzi'āt* (79): 23-24]

And Allāh made him an example in history of His punishment to

such people,

فَاسْتَخَفَّ قَوْمَهُ
فَأَطَاعُوهُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَاسِقِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾ فَلَمَّا آسَفُونَا
انتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾ فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ
سَلَفًا وَمَثَلًا لِّلْآخِرِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾

«In this way he swayed his people and they succumbed to him; they were a deviant people. Then when they had provoked Our wrath, We took revenge on them and drowned every one of them. We made them a thing of the past and an example for later people.»

[*az-Zukhruf* (43): 54-56]

It is unlawful to call anyone by the name of *Malik al-Amlāk*. Bukhārī and Muslim report on the authority of Abū Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

> On the Day of Resurrection Allāh will hold the earth and fold the heaven with His right hand. Then He will say, "I am the King, where are the kings [who reigned] on the earth?"[5]

Bukhārī also reports on the authority of Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

> Indeed the most disloyal and treacherous name in the sight of Allāh is that of a person named the king of kings (*maliku-l-amlāk*).

[5] Bukhārī Eng. Trans., vol. 9, pg. 355 #479; Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 4, pg. 1462 #6703

Muslim adds in his report,

> For there is no Mālik except for Allāh, the Mighty and Magnificent.[6]

Aḥmad reports that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

> The person towards whom Allāh displays the most anger, and the most despicable on the Day of Resurrection is one who was named king of kings (*maliku-l-amlāk*) for there is no Malik except for Allāh.[7]

al-Qurṭubī and ash-Shawkānī both stated that with respect to Allāh, *Malik* points to an Attribute of the Essence whereas *Mālik* points to an Attribute of Action.

---

[6] Bukhārī Eng. Trans., vol. 8, pg. 144 #224, 225; Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 3, pg. 1171 #5339

[7] Aḥmad #7329, 8176, 10384 on the authority of Abū Hurayrah. al-Albānī, *as-Ṣaḥīḥah*#915 said it was ṣaḥīḥ

6.2 Meaning of the word *yawm*

The word *yawm* refers to a period of time. In common usage it refers to the time between the onset of dawn and sunset. It can also refer to a particular portion of time or hour in a day as in His saying,

ٱلْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ
عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِى وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ ٱلْإِسْلَٰمَ دِينًا

«This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed my favour upon you and chosen for you Islām as your religion»

[*al-Mā'idah* (5): 3]

It can also refer to periods of time greater than one day as in His sayings,

يُدَبِّرُ ٱلْأَمْرَ مِنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ إِلَى ٱلْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يَعْرُجُ
إِلَيْهِ فِى يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُۥٓ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ مِّمَّا تَعُدُّونَ ﴿٥﴾

«He arranges each matter from the heaven to the earth; then it will ascend to Him in a Day the extent of which is a thousand years of those which you count»

[*as-Sajdah* (32): 5]

تَعْرُجُ ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ وَٱلرُّوحُ إِلَيْهِ فِى
يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُۥ خَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ ﴿٤﴾

«The Angels and the Spirit ascend to Him during a day the extent of which is fifty thousand years»

[*al-Ma'ārij* (70): 4][8]

[8] Qurṭubī, vol. 1, pg. 100

6.3 Meaning of the word *Dīn*

The word *dīn* here means reckoning or recompense and it is in this sense that the word is employed in His saying,

يَوْمَئِذٍ يُوَفِّيهِمُ ٱللَّهُ دِينَهُمُ ٱلْحَقَّ

«On that Day Allāh will pay them their *dīn* in truth»
[*an-Nūr* (24): 25]

meaning: the recompense of their actions with complete justice. Allāh also said,

أَءِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظَٰمًا أَءِنَّا لَمَدِينُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

«Then when we have died and become dust and bones, we will indeed be recompensed?»
[*as-Ṣāffāt* (37): 53][9]

Ibn ʿAbbās said in explanation of the words *yawmi-d-dīn*,

> The Day on which the creations are judged - the Day of Resurrection. He will recompense them for their actions; if they were good then it will be good, if they were bad then it will be bad except for that which He forgives for indeed the only order [on that Day] will be His order,
>
> أَلَا لَهُ ٱلْخَلْقُ وَٱلْأَمْرُ تَبَارَكَ ٱللَّهُ رَبُّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾
>
> **«Unquestionably to Him belongs the creation and the Command»**
> [*al-Aʿrāf* (7): 54][10]

[9] ibn ʿAṭiyyah, vol. 1, pg. 71; Qurṭubī, vol. 1, pg. 100; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 48, ash-Shanqīṭī, vol. 1, pg. 32

[10] at-Ṭabarī, vol. 1, pg. 98

There is no further explanation in this verse of *al-Fātiḥah* as to what the Day of *Dīn* is, but this is explained in His saying,

﴿١٦﴾ وَمَآ أَدۡرَىٰكَ مَا يَوۡمُ ٱلدِّينِ ﴿١٧﴾ ثُمَّ مَآ أَدۡرَىٰكَ مَا يَوۡمُ ٱلدِّينِ
﴿١٨﴾ يَوۡمَ لَا تَمۡلِكُ نَفۡسٞ لِّنَفۡسٖ شَيۡـٔٗاۖ وَٱلۡأَمۡرُ يَوۡمَئِذٖ لِّلَّهِ ﴿١٩﴾

> **«And what will make you comprehend what the Day of *Dīn* is? Again what will make you comprehend what the Day of *Dīn* is? It is the Day when no person shall have power [to do] anything for another. The command that Day will be Allāh's Alone»**
>
> [*al-Infiṭār* (82): 17-19][11]

6.4 The place of this verse in the *Sūrah*

One can be a lord, and merciful, yet not be an owner or king, lordship is not perfected except with these two matters and hence this verse shows us that the Lordship of Allāh is complete and perfect.[12] After having mentioned that all praise is due to Allāh, Allāh mentions that He is also the Lord, the Merciful and the Master. Hence He is praised for being Allāh, praised in His Lordship, praised for His mercy and praised for His sovereignty.[13] Moreover all the Names of Allāh revolve around the meanings contained in the Names mentioned in this chapter.[14]

Ibn al-Qayyim said,

---

[11] ash-Shanqīṭī, vol. 1, pg. 32

[12] al-Baqā'ī, vol. 1, pg. 14

[13] an-Nasafī, vol. 1, pg. 16; ibn al-Qayyim, pg. 35

[14] ibn al-Qayyim, pg. 25

> 'So in this chapter Five Names of Allāh have been mentioned: Allāh which in fact indicates all His Names and Attributes, and deals with His beauty, *jamāl*, and magnificence, *jalāl*; *ar-Rabb* which deals with His attributes of deed, His omnipotence, His being Alone in bringing harm and benefit, His granting and preventing, and His will being implemented; *ar-Raḥmān* and *ar-Raḥīm* which deal with His beneficence, munificence, His kindness, His gentleness, and His doing good; and *al-Malik* which deals with His justice, His raising and lowering, His granting and withholding, His honouring and humiliating, and His ruling, judging and recompensing.'[15]

In this verse following the verse concerning the mercy of Allāh lies a reminder that Allāh is also the Judge. It establishes the existence of the Resurrection and final judgment. Therefore not only should we love Him for His nourishing and sustaining us and for His compassion and mercy to us, but we should also hold Him in awe knowing that our ultimate happiness or misery rests with Him Alone.[16] Ibn al-Jawzī said,

> It is reported that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, "When Allāh, Blessed and Exalted is He, will gather the first and last people, a caller will proclaim, 'This is the Day of Judgment, this is the Day of Decision that you used to deny'"
>
> O indigent one! Look to your self and examine it; O weak of faith and certainty! O one who claims to be a believer yet works the deeds of the deniers, the dissenters, those who have abandoned the Sunnah of the Master of the Messengers and Seal of the Prophets! What has

[15] Ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārij as-Sālikīn*, vol. 1, pg. 34, summarised

[16] Abū Ḥayyān, vol. 1, pg. 139

> led you to be considered one of the liars in the sight of Allāh? Were you to fear the punishment of the Day of Judgment, you would surely have acted upon the Clear Qur'ān; were you one of the believers, you surely would have obeyed the Lord of the first and last. Ask your Lord to relieve you from your affliction of the disease of sin and wrench yourself away from all vile and blameworthy deeds.[17]

We are also given consolation that although on the Day of Judgement, Allāh will be angry as He has never been before, the fact that Allāh mentioned His mercy first in the previous verse indicates to us, as proven by the authentic ḥadīth, that His mercy precedes His wrath.[18]

---

[17] ibn al-Jawzī, pg. 71

[18] al-Baqā'ī, vol. 1, pg. 13; al-Fairozabādī, vol. 1, pg. 130

CHAPTER VII

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ

You Alone we worship

After having praised Allāh, the servant proceeds to acknowledge his servitude and dire need of his Lord, Exalted is He.

7.1 The verse exemplifies the meaning of *Tawḥīd*

This verse points to the actualisation of the meaning of *Lā ilāha illāAllāh* (there is none worthy of worship except for Allāh) for its meaning is comprised of two matters: negation and affirmation. The negation aspect, contained in the words *lā ilāha*, means to relinquish every single object of worship besides Allāh in all actions of worship. The affirmation aspect, contained in the words *illāAllāh*, means to single out the Lord of the heavens and the earth Alone for all matters of worship in the way that has been legislated by the *Sharīʿah*.

The negation in *lā ilāha illāAllāh* is shown by placing the object of worship first in the verse such that it reads ***"You Alone..."*** It is established in the rules of the Arabic language that placing the object first in a sentence is one of the ways of confining the meaning

of the verb to the object alone.

The affirmation part of the *kalima* is shown in His saying, ***"we worship"***.

Allāh, Exalted is He, has explained this meaning, which is alluded to here, in detail elsewhere,

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ ٱعْبُدُوا۟ رَبَّكُمُ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَكُمْ

«O Mankind! Worship your Lord who created you»

[*al-Baqarah* (2): 21]

expounding the affirmation aspect with his words, ***"worship your Lord"*** and the negation aspect at the end of this noble verse with His words,

فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا۟ لِلَّهِ أَندَادًا وَأَنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

«So do not set up rivals with Allāh while you know»

[*al-Baqarah* (2): 22]

He, Exalted is He, also says,

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِى كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولًا أَنِ ٱعْبُدُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ
وَٱجْتَنِبُوا۟ ٱلطَّـٰغُوتَ

«We have indeed sent a Messenger to every people saying: worship Allāh and leave all that is worshipped besides Him»

[*an-Naḥl* (16): 36]

expounding the affirmation with His words, ***"worship Allāh"*** and the negation with His words, ***"and leave all that is worshipped besides Allāh."***

فَمَن يَكْفُرْ بِٱلطَّٰغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنۢ بِٱللَّهِ فَقَدِ
ٱسْتَمْسَكَ بِٱلْعُرْوَةِ ٱلْوُثْقَىٰ

«And whosoever rejects all that is worshipped besides Allāh and believes in Allāh has held onto the most trustworthy handhold»

[*al-Baqarah* (2): 256]

expounding the negation with his words, ***"whosoever rejects all that is worshipped besides Allāh"*** and the affirmation with His words, ***"and believes in Allāh"***.

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَٰهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِۦٓ
إِنَّنِى بَرَآءٌ مِّمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ إِلَّا ٱلَّذِى فَطَرَنِى فَإِنَّهُۥ سَيَهْدِينِ

«And when Abraham said to his father and his people: Indeed I am free of what you worship except He who created me»

[*az-Zukhruf* (43): 26-27]

وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِىٓ إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُۥ لَآ إِلَٰهَ
إِلَّآ أَنَا۠ فَٱعْبُدُونِ ﴿٢٥﴾

«And We did not send a Messenger before you except that We revealed to him: there is none worthy of worship but Me, so worship Me»

[*al-Anbiyā'* (21): 25]

وَسْـَٔلْ مَنْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ مِن رُّسُلِنَآ
أَجَعَلْنَا مِن دُونِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ءَالِهَةً يُعْبَدُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

> **«Ask those of Our Messengers whom We sent before you: did We ever appoint gods to be worshipped besides Allāh»**
>
> [*az-Zukhruf* (43): 45][1]

7.2 The meaning of *'ibādah*

Linguistically *'ibādah* is derived from *'abada* which means to be subservient and to subjugate. In Islām, the word *'ibādah*, or worship, is a comprehensive term referring to everything, inward and outward that Allāh loves and is pleased with.[2] Its pillars are love, hope, fear, submission and humility.

Worship can only be considered to be true worship when the way of performing it is taken from the Messenger (ﷺ), seeking thereby the face of Allāh only. These two conditions have to be present for the action to be considered worship and hence acceptable to Allāh[3] and are proven by the ḥadīth recorded by Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

> Indeed actions are by intentions and every person shall have what he intended. So the one whose migration (*hijra*) was to Allāh and His Messenger, his migration was to Allāh and His Messenger; and the one whose migration was for some worldly gain, or a woman to marry, his migration was for that which he migrated to.[4]

---

[1] ash-Shanqīṭī, vol. 1, pp. 32-33

[2] ibn Taymiyyah, *al-'Ubudiyyah*, pg. 1

[3] ibn al-Qayyim, pg. 73

[4] Bukhārī Eng. Trans. 1, pg. 1 #1, Muslim Eng. Trans. 3, pg. 1056 #4692

and by the ḥadīth recorded by Muslim on the authority of ʿĀ'ishah that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

> Whoever does an action that we have not commanded, it must be rejected.[5]

Allāh, Exalted is He says,

تَبَٰرَكَ ٱلَّذِى بِيَدِهِ ٱلْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١﴾ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَ
ٱلْمَوْتَ وَٱلْحَيَوٰةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ۚ وَهُوَ ٱلْعَزِيزُ ٱلْغَفُورُ ﴿٢﴾

> **«...[He] Who created death and life that he may test which of you is best in action»**
>
> [*al-Mulk* (67): 2]

Fuḍayl bin ʿIyāḍ commented on this by saying,

> i.e. who is sincere in [his action] and correct in it. The action, if it is sincere but not correct, is not accepted; if it is correct but not sincere, it is not accepted. It is only accepted when it is both sincere and correct - it is sincere when it is done for the sake of Allāh and correct when it is done in compliance to the Sunnah.[6]

The proof for what Fuḍayl said lies in the verse,

إِنَّمَآ أَنَا۠ بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰٓ إِلَىَّ أَنَّمَآ إِلَٰهُكُمْ إِلَٰهٌ وَٰحِدٌ ۖ فَمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا۟
لِقَآءَ رَبِّهِۦ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَٰلِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِۦٓ أَحَدًۢا ﴿١١٠﴾

> **«...So whosoever hopes for the meeting with His**

---

[5] Muslim Eng. Trans. 3, pg. 931 #4266

[6] ibn Rajab, *Jāmiʿ al-ʿUlūm wa-l-Ḥikam*, vol 1, pg. 29. See also al-Baghawī, vol. 8, pg. 176; al-Ālūsī, vol. 29, pp. 8-10

Lord, let him work righteousness and associate none as a partner in the worship of His Lord»

[*al-Kahf* (18): 110]

It is in this respect that Imām Aḥmad said that the foundation of the religion is built upon three aḥādīth:

- Indeed actions are by intention.
- Whoever introduces into this affair of ours that which is not part of it, it must be rejected.
- The lawful is clear and the unlawful is clear and between the two are affairs that are unclear.[7]

The whole religion is based upon doing the commanded, avoiding the prohibited and holding back from the doubtful matters; this is what the third ḥadīth proves. However two conditions have to be met to accomplish this:

1) outwardly the action must be done as taught by the Sunnah, this is proven by the second ḥadīth.

2) inwardly the action must be done seeking the Face of Allāh, this is proven by the first ḥadīth.[8]

---

[7] Bukhārī #2501 and Muslim #1599 on the authority of an-Nu'mān ibn Bashīr.

The ḥadīth is also recorded on the authority of ibn 'Abbās by at-Ṭabarānī, *al-Kabīr* #10824; ibn 'Umar by at-Ṭabarānī, *al-Awsaṭ* #2889; Jābir by al-Khaṭīb, vol. 9, pp. 70; 'Ammār ibn Yāsir by Abū Ya'lā #1653 all with ḍa'īf asānīd.

[8] ibn Rajab, vol. 1, pp. 29

7.3 Worship is the desired goal

Allāh, Exalted is He says,

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ ٱلْجِنَّ وَٱلْإِنسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾

«I have not created jinn and mankind except that they may worship Me»

[*adh-Dhāriyāt* (51): 56]

وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ يَضِيقُ صَدْرُكَ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾ فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَكُن مِّنَ ٱلسَّٰجِدِينَ ﴿٩٨﴾ وَٱعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَكَ ٱلْيَقِينُ ﴿٩٩﴾

«We know that your breast is constrained by what they say, so exalt [Allāh] with praise of your Lord and be of those who prostrate to Him and worship your Lord until the certainty comes to you»

[*al-Ḥijr* (15): 97-99]

meaning by certainty here, death, by consensus of the exegetes.[9] This verse orders the Prophet (ﷺ) to continuously worship Allāh until his death, and also shows that through worship does one relieve himself of difficulty and despondency. The reason for this is when a person busies himself with worship, he is moving from interacting with creation to interacting with his Lord.[10]

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ ٱعْبُدُوا۟ رَبَّكُمُ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَكُمْ

«O Mankind! Worship your Lord who created you...»

---

[9] at-Ṭabarī, vol. 7, pg. 554; ibn al-Qayyim, pg. 94

[10] ar-Rāzī, vol. 1, pg. 214

[*al-Baqarah* (2): 21]

All the Messengers, from the first to the last, called to the import of this verse,

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ
وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ

«We have indeed sent a Messenger to every people saying: worship Allāh and leave all that is worshipped besides Him»

[*an-Naḥl* (16): 36]

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِي إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَٰهَ
إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونِ ﴿٢٥﴾

«And We did not send a Messenger before you except that We revealed to him: there is none worthy of worship but Me, so worship Me»

[*al-Anbiyā'* (21): 25]

It is with the attribute of servitude that Allāh describes the best of His creation, by way of honouring them,

لَّن يَسْتَنكِفَ
الْمَسِيحُ أَن يَكُونَ عَبْدًا لِّلَّهِ وَلَا الْمَلَائِكَةُ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ

«The Messiah would never disdain to be a servant of Allāh nor would the Angels near to Him»

[*an-Nisā'* (4): 172]

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَذِيرًا

«Blessed be He who revealed the Criterion to His

servant»

[*al-Furqān* (25): 1]

وَأَنَّهُۥ لَمَّا قَامَ عَبْدُ ٱللَّهِ يَدْعُوهُ كَادُوا۟ يَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِ لِبَدًا ﴿١٩﴾

«When the servant of Allāh stands, calling on Him, they almost swarm all over him»

[*al-Jinn* (72): 19]

سُبْحَٰنَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَسْرَىٰ بِعَبْدِهِۦ لَيْلًا

«Glory be to Him who took His servant on a journey by night...»

[*al-Isrā'* (17): 1]

وَعِبَادُ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى ٱلْأَرْضِ
هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ ٱلْجَٰهِلُونَ قَالُوا۟ سَلَٰمًا ﴿٦٣﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ
يَبِيتُونَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سُجَّدًا وَقِيَٰمًا ﴿٦٤﴾

«The servants of the All-Merciful are those who walk lightly on the earth and, who, when the ignorant speak to them, say, 'Peace'; those who pass the night prostrating and standing before their Lord;...»

[*al-Furqān* (25): 63-64]

يَٰعِبَادِ لَا خَوْفٌ
عَلَيْكُمُ ٱلْيَوْمَ وَلَآ أَنتُمْ تَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ بِـَٔايَٰتِنَا
وَكَانُوا۟ مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٦٩﴾

«My servants, you will feel no fear today; you will know no sorrow. As for those who had faith in Our signs and became Muslims: 'Enter the Gardens, you

and your wives, delighting in your joy'»

[*az-Zukhruf* (43): 68-69][11]

Finally, ibn 'Abbās explained this portion of the verse to mean,

> You Alone we single out in worship, fear and hope; You and no-one else.[12]

وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ۝

You Alone we ask for help

7.4 You Alone we ask for help

Meaning that we do not seek aid from anyone but You because the affair in its totality is under Your control Alone, no one else has even an atoms weight of control over it. Again the object of the verb has been brought before the verb to stress this fact. ***"You Alone"*** has been repeated twice in the verse to emphasise that both worship and asking for help are matters that should be directed to Allāh Alone; were the verse to read, 'You Alone we worship and ask for help,' it would then admit the possibility of asking other than Allāh for help.[13]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

[11] ibn al-Qayyim, pp. 92-93; Abū Ḥayyān, vol. 1, pg. 143

[12] at-Ṭabarī, vol. 1, pg. 99

[13] al-Kirmānī, pg. 112; as-Sama'ānī, vol. 1, pg. 37; Abū Ḥayyān, vol. 1, pg. 143; al-Ālūsī, vol. 1, pg. 122; ash-Shanqīṭī, vol. 1, pg. 33

> Be mindful of Allāh and Allāh will protect you. Be mindful of Allāh and you will find Him in front of you. If you ask, ask of Allāh, if you seek help, seek help with Allāh...[14]

To ask for help means that one has trust in, and dependance upon, the one being asked; this is none other than the meaning of *'tawakkul*.[15] Therefore in this statement following His saying, ***"You Alone we worship"*** lies an indication that it is not permissible to put our *tawakkul* in anyone except the One who deserves worship because no one else has control over the affairs.[16] This meaning which is alluded to here, is clearly explained in other verses:

فَٱعْبُدْهُ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَيْهِ

«So worship Him and put your trust in Him»

[*Yūsuf* (12): 123]

فَإِن تَوَلَّوْاْ فَقُلْ حَسْبِيَ ٱللَّهُ لَآ إِلَٰهَ
إِلَّا هُوَ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَهُوَ رَبُّ ٱلْعَرْشِ ٱلْعَظِيمِ ﴿١٢٩﴾

«But if they turn away, say: Allāh is sufficient for me, none has the right to be worshipped but Him, in Him I put my trust...»

[*Tawbah* (9): 129]

رَّبُّ ٱلْمَشْرِقِ وَٱلْمَغْرِبِ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَٱتَّخِذْهُ وَكِيلًا ﴿٩﴾

«The Lord of the East and the West, none deserves to be worshipped but Him, so take Him as the

[14] Aḥmad

[15] ibn al-Qayyim, pg. 66

[16] ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 48; ash-Shanqīṭī, vol. 1, pg. 33

Disposer of your affairs»

[*al-Muzzammil* (73): 9]

قُلْ هُوَ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنُ ءَامَنَّا بِهِۦ وَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ هُوَ فِى ضَلَٰلٍ مُّبِينٍ

«Say: He is the All-Merciful, we have believed in Him and put our trust in Him...»

[*al-Mulk* (67): 29]

The whole of the religion of Islām revolves around these two principles: we do not worship any save Allāh and we do not put our trust in anyone, or anything, save Him. These are the means to everlasting bliss and security from all evils, there is no path to success and everlasting felicity except by establishing these two pillars.[17] It is for this reason that some of the *Salaf* said,

> The secret of the Qur'ān lies in *al-Fātiḥah* and its secret is the verse, ***"You Alone do we worship and You Alone we ask for help"***

"You Alone do we worship" has been mentioned before ***"You Alone do we ask for help"*** because worship is the intended goal and the help of Allāh is the route to attaining that goal, hence the most important thing has been mentioned first. It is as if the servant is saying, 'I have commenced this action of worship and I seek Your help in completing it.' If it is asked, 'Why mention seeking help after mentioning worship when it is known that seeking Allāh's help to perform an action of worship should occur before that action?' The answer to this is that what is required before the action of worship is the *tawfiq*, or divine accord, of Allāh, whereas help is required for the duration of the action of worship. Another reason

[17] ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 48; as-Sa'dī

given is that the wording is by way of mentioning the general before the specific,[18] and to show that attention should be given to His, Exalted is He, right before the right of His servant. This is because worship is something that Allāh commands of us whereas help is something we require from Him.[19]

In this verse the asking of aid has been mentioned, but exactly in what has been left umentioned, i.e. the objects of the verb 'we ask for help' have been ommitted, this is so as to generalise the meaning of the verse to all actions, in the same way that we previously discussed for the *basmAllāh*. The same applies to the statement, 'we worship.'[20]

Ibn Taymiyyah said, 'I pondered the most beneficial supplication and I found it to be asking Allāh to help us in doing that which pleases Him; this I found in the verse, ***"You Alone we worship and You Alone we ask for help"*** '[21]

Those who are closest to Allāh are those who fulfill this verse the most, the Prophet (ﷺ), out of love for him, said to Mu'ādh,

> O Mu'ādh! By Allāh, I love you and I enjoin you never to leave saying these words at the end of every prayer, 'O Allāh! Help me in remembering You, thanking You

[18] i.e. seeking help is part of worship

[19] as-Sama'ānī, vol. 1, pg. 37; al-Baghawī, vol. 1, pg. 54; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 49; ibn al-Qayyim, vol.1. pg. 67; ibn 'Ādil, vol. 1, pp. 201-202; al-Ālūsī, vol. 1, pg. 119; as-Sa'dī

[20] an-Nasafī, vol. 1, pg. 16; ibn 'Ādil, vol. 1, pg. 202; Abū Ḥayyān, vol. 1, pg. 143; al-Ālūsī, vol. 1, pg. 122

[21] ibn al-Qayyim, pg. 71

and making good my worship of You.'[22]

7.5 Asking of the creation

The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

> Be mindful of Allāh and Allāh will protect you. Be mindful of Allāh and you will find Him in front of you. If you ask, ask of Allāh, if you seek help, seek help with Allāh...[23]

This ḥadīth expresses the same meaning as the verse under discussion and clearly shows that Allāh, Mighty and Magnificent, is the One who should be asked and the One from whom help should be sought. With regards to asking in general, Allāh says,

وَسْـَٔلُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ مِن فَضْلِهِۦٓ

«Ask Allāh of His bounty»

[*an-Nisā'* (4): 32]

at-Tirmidhī records the ḥadīth reported on the authority of ibn Mas'ūd that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

> Ask Allāh of His bounty for Allāh loves to be asked.[24]

and on the authority of Abū Hurayrah,

---

[22] Abū Dāwūd #1522 and Aḥmad #22119, 22126. It was declared ṣaḥīḥ by ibn Ḥibbān #2020, ibn Khuzaymah #751, al-Ḥākim #1010 with adh-Dhahabī agreeing and al-Albānī #7969

The du'ā is also recorded on the authority of Abū Hurayrah by Aḥmad #7982

[23] Aḥmad

[24] at-Tirmidhī #3571 and it was declared ḍa'īf by al-Manāwī, vol. 4, pg. 143, and al-Albānī #3278

> Allāh is angry at the one who does not ask of Him[25]

and in another ḥadīth,

> Each of you should ask his Lord to fulfil his need, even if it be his shoe-lace when it breaks.[26]

There are many aḥādīth that prohibit one from asking of the creation, indeed the Prophet (ﷺ) took a pledge from a group of his Companions that they would never ask people for anything, amongst these were Abū Bakr, Abū Dharr and Thawbān.[27] Know that asking of Allāh and not the creation is what is necessary. This is because to ask is to display humbleness and submissiveness before the one being asked as well as dependence upon him; it also contains an implicit acknowledgment that the one being asked has the ability to remove harm, grant the object of desire and promote benefit. It is not allowable to show humility, submissiveness and need except to Allāh alone because these matters exemplify the reality of worship. Aḥmad used to supplicate, 'O Allāh! Just as You have prevented my face to prostrating to other than You, also prevent it from asking of other than You.' None is able to remove harm or promote the good save Him as He says,

وَإِن يَمْسَسْكَ ٱللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهُۥٓ إِلَّا هُوَ ۖ وَإِن
يُرِدْكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَلَا رَآدَّ لِفَضْلِهِۦ ۚ يُصِيبُ بِهِۦ مَن يَشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِۦ ۚ

«If Allāh afflicts you with harm, no one can re-

---

[25] at-Tirmidhī #3373, Aḥmad #9701, 9719, 10178. It was declared ḥasan by as-Suyūṭī #2622 and ṣaḥīḥ by al-Albānī #2418

[26] at-Tirmidhī #3612 who said it was gharīb and it was declared ḍa'īf by al-Albāni #4945, 4946

[27] Muslim #1043

move it except Him. If He desires good for you, no one can avert His favour»

[*Yūnus* (10): 107]

Allāh loves to be asked, to be hoped in and desired at times of need, to be supplicated frequently and resolutely. He is able to grant all of mankind all their requests without his dominion decreasing in the slightest. Created beings on the other are the exact opposite, they dislike being asked due to their own inability, need and poverty. This is why Wahb bin Munabbih said to one who would frequent the door of the ruler, 'Woe to you! You run to one who would shut his door in your face, display his poverty to you and conceal his riches and you leave One who opens His door to you in the middle of the night and the middle of the day, who displays His richness and proclaims, ***"invoke Me and I will respond"*** ' Ṭāwūs said to 'Aṭā', 'Beware of asking your needs to be met by one who would close his door in your face, instead it is upon you to go to the One whose door is open until the Day of Judgment, One who has ordered you to ask Him and promised you that He would respond.'

With regards asking Allāh Alone for help, this is because man alone cannot promote good for himself or repress harm, hence there is no one who can aid him to promote benefit in his religious and worldly life except for Allāh, Mighty and Magnificent. The servant is in perpetual need of the aid of Allāh in performing the obligations, leaving the prohibitions and bearing with patience the vicissitudes of the decree in this life and after death. The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

> ...be desirous of that which would benefit you and ask the aid of Allāh and do not become disheartened[28]

[28] Muslim #2664

al-Ḥasan wrote to 'Umar bin 'Abdu-l-'Azīz, 'Do not seek the aid of any besides Allāh or else Allāh would abandon you to him.' One of the Salaf would say, 'My Lord! I am amazed at how one who knows You can place his hope in someone else and ask the help of someone else.'[29]

7.6 Change from the third person to the second person

Moreover this verse employs an address in the second person and this is most fitting at such an occasion because when one turns to invoke his Lord, He is near and responsive. Allāh, Exalted is He says,

إِذَا سَأَلَكَ
عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ ٱلدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ

«When My servants asks you concerning Me then I am close. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me»

[*al-Baqarah* (2): 186]

[29] ibn Rajab, vol., *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wa-l-Ḥikam*, vol. 1, pp. 478-482, with summary.

One must realise that it is not unlawful to ask of created beings for things within human ability but one recourses to it when he has to, ones trust must always be in Allāh, Exalted is He, and one must believe that the one helping or being asked for help is but a means to an end. Refer to ibn Taymiyyah, vol. 1, pp. 103-105, 434.

However, it must also be realised that it is, even without being asked, recommended for a Muslim to go to the aid of his brother in faith in affairs that would further his religious life or permissible worldly life. Muslim records that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, 'Whoever relieves a believer from a distress of this world, Allāh will rescue him from a difficulty of the difficulties of the Hereafter. Whoever alleviates the situation of one in dire straits who cannot repay his debt, Allāh will alleviate his lot in both this world and the Hereafter. Whoever conceals the faults of a Muslim, Allāh will conceal his faults in this life and the Hereafter. Allāh is helping the servnat so long as the servant is helping his brother.'

The previous verses were in the third person as they were informing us about Allāh. Another explanation given is that the style of the verses has changed from the third person to second person in order to stimulate and awaken the reciter such that his attention is drawn to the content of the verse.[30]

7.7 Why is this verse in the plural?

If it is asked: why does the verse state ***"we worship"*** when there is only one person reciting it?

Some answer by postulating that by saying this, the servant is expressing his own deficient state. It is as if he is saying, 'My Lord! My worship has not reached any level whereby it deserves to be mentioned, being wrought with deficiency, so I will mix it with mention of the worship of all servants to give it some significance.'[31]

Others say the answer lies in the fact that the wise *Sharīʿah* has legislated many actions of worship to be done in congregation and it has also recommended for the servant of Allāh to supplicate for his brother Muslim.[32] Shaykh Ṣāliḥ bin Ghānim as-Sadlān writes while discussing the virtue of congregational prayer,

> From amongst the lofty qualities of the Islāmic *Sharīʿah* is that it has legislated many actions of worship to be done in congregation. The Muslims gather that they may keep in contact with each other, come to know each other, seek advice from one another, seek help in re-

[30] al-Bayḍāwī, vol. 1, pg. 64; Abū Ḥayyān, vol. 1, pg. 141; ash-Shawkānī, vol. 1, pg. 22

[31] al-Ālūsī, vol. 1, pg. 118

[32] ar-Rāzī, vol. 1, pg. 213; ibn 'Ādil, vol. 1, pg. 202; al-Ālūsī, vol. 1, pg. 119

moving any difficulties that they may be in, and discuss various issues with each other. This contains great benefit and many desirable points which cannot be enumerated such as teaching the ignorant, helping the needy, softening the hearts, and manifesting the greatness of Islām. The Heavenly Revelation endorses this understanding for when it prohibits and commands it does not direct this prohibition to any specific individual but to the congregation as a whole. Allāh says,

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ ٱرْكَعُوا۟ وَٱسْجُدُوا۟ وَٱعْبُدُوا۟ رَبَّكُمْ وَٱفْعَلُوا۟ ٱلْخَيْرَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ۩ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَجَٰهِدُوا۟ فِى ٱللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِۦ

«O you who believe! Bow, prostrate and worship your Lord. Perform the good so that you may be successful and perform *Jihād* in the way of Allāh as it should be done...»

[*al-Ḥajj* (22):77-78]

When the Muslim stands before Allāh, intimately conversing with Him and humbling himself before Him, he does not speak as an individual rather he speaks as one part of the whole. He says,

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ﴿٥﴾

«You Alone do we worship and You Alone we ask for help»

[*al-Fātiḥah* (1):5]

He does not say, 'It is only You I worship and it is only Your Aid I seek.' Then he asks Him from His goodness

and guidance but he does not ask for himself only, instead he says,

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ۝٥ ٱهْدِنَا ٱلصِّرَٰطَ ٱلْمُسْتَقِيمَ ۝٦ صِرَٰطَ ٱلَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ ٱلْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا ٱلضَّآلِّينَ ۝٧

«Guide us to the Straight Path. The Path of those whom You have guided, not [the path] of those who have earned [Your] anger nor those who have gone astray»

[*al-Fātiḥah* (1):6-7]

Indeed the congregational prayer is from the greatest of means to removing sectarian differences and racism based upon ones colour, race or land. Through the congregational prayer the Muslims attain mutual love, respect and brotherhood. This because the elders become known and are thereby respected, the poor and needy become known and are thereby helped, the scholars become known and are thereby asked, and the ignorant become known and are thereby taught.[33]

Muslim records on the authority of Abū ad-Dardā' that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

There is no Muslim who supplicates for his brother in his absence except that the Angels say: The same for you as well.[34]

---

[33] Sāliḥ as-Sadlān, *Ṣalātu-l-Jamā'ah Ḥukmuhā wa Aḥkāmuhā*, pp. 23-24

[34] Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 4, pg. 1429 #6588

Muslim also records on the authority of Abū ad-Dardā' that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

> The supplication of a Muslim for his brother in his absence is answered. At his head is the Angel commissioned [for conveying the supplication to Allāh], whenever he supplicates for good for his brother, the Angel says: And for you is the same.[35]

[35] Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 4, pg. 1429 #6590

7.8 The place of this verse in the *Sūrah*

After having established that Allāh deserves praise, that He should be loved, after having pondered some of His Names, Attributes, and Actions, after having combined within ourselves desire and dread of Him, the intelligent person will now turn to such a one and direct his worship to him.[36]

To worship Allāh is to display the gratitude due Him and to establish His *Ulūhiyyah* because He is the one who is deserving of being worshipped to the exception of all else. To ask Him for help is to display the gratitude due Him and to establish His *Rubūbiyyah* because He is the One who controls and regulates all affairs. This is why this verse has been mentioned after having mentioned His Name, 'Allāh' and His Name, 'Lord'.[37]

Ibn al-Qayyim said,

> 'The witnessing of His *Ulūhiyyah* and *Rubūbiyyah* are realised in this verse. When the servant says, ***"You Alone"*** he is witnessing the Essence that combines together all the Attributes of perfection and possesses every Beautiful Name. When the servant says, ***"we worship,"*** he is witnessing all actions of worship, outward and inward, in intention, speech, deed, and state. When he says, ***"You Alone we worship,"*** he has combined and witnessed *Ilāhiyyah*. When he says, ***"You Alone we ask for help,"*** he is witnessing all types of asking for help, realising *tawakkul*, and relegating his affairs to Allāh. Through this statement the servant has combined and witnessed

[36] al-Baqāʿī, vol. 1, pg. 16

[37] Rashīd Riḍā, vol. 1, pg. 54

> *Rubūbiyyah*.'[38]

He also said,

> 'This chapter describes the worshipped may He be blessed and Exalted through three of His Names; and all the Beautiful Names and Perfect Attributes revolve around these three: Allāh, ar-Rabb, and ar-Raḥmān. This chapter is built upon the pillars of *Ulūhiyyah*, *Rubūbiyyah*, and *raḥmah*. ***"You Alone we worship"***, is built upon *Ulūhiyyah*, ***"You Alone we ask for help,"*** is built upon *Rubūbiyyah*,' and asking for guidance to the Straight Path is done through the attribute of *raḥmah*. Praising, *ḥamd*, also encompasses these three matters for He is praised for His *Ulūhiyyah*, His *Rubūbiyyah*, and His mercy.'[39]

al-Farghānī said that whoever recites this verse is saved from the deviancy of *qadr*[40] and *jabr*.[41] ***"We worship"*** saves from *jabr* and ***"we ask for help"*** saves from *qadr*. Moreover, ***"You Alone"*** comprises a refutation of the *Dahriyyah*[42] and atheists because it is an address directed to something which is present.[43]

In summary, 'Abdullāh bin 'Abbās said in explanation to this verse,

---

[38] Ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārij as-Sālikīn*, vol. 3, pg. 331

[39] Ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārij as-Sālikīn*, vol. 1, pg. 9

[40] i.e the belief that man has a completely free will

[41] i.e. the belief that man has no free will, that he is coerced into doing whatever he does.

[42] Those who deny the existence or reality of the Hereafter

[43] at-Ṭabarī, vol. 1, pg. 99; al-Qurṭubī, vol. 1, pg. 101; Abū Ḥayyān, vol. 1, pg. 143

O our Lord! It is You Alone that we single out for belief, fear and hope. It is Your aid Alone that we seek in order to obey You and indeed in all of our affairs[44]

[44] ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 49; as-Suyūṭī, vol. 1, pg. 39

CHAPTER VIII

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ۝٦
صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ

Guide us to the Straight Path, The Path of those whom You have favoured

After praising Allāh, the servant then proceeds to ask of Him from His bounty and blessings. This is the most virtuous way of asking Allāh by first praising Him, expressing ones servitude to Him and then asking of Him.[1] It is in this respect that Prophet (ﷺ) said,

> O Allāh! To You belongs all praise. You are the Lord of the heavens and the earth. To You belongs all praise, You are the Maintainer and Creator of the heavens and the earth and whosoever is in them. To You belongs all praise, You are the Light of the heavens and the earth.

[1] ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 50; ibn al-Qayyim, pg. 23

> Your saying is the truth, Your promise is the truth, the meeting with You is the truth, Paradise is true, Hellfire is true and the Hour is true. O Allāh! To You I have submitted, in You I have believed, upon You do I rely, to You I repent, with You I stand against all opposition, and to You I go for judgment; forgive me all that I have done in the past, what I will do in the future, what I have kept secret and what I have openly shown. You are my God, there is none worthy of worship except for You.[2]

thereby first praising Allāh, then expressing his servitude to Him and then asking of Him.

8.1 The mannerisms of supplication

Abū Dāwūd records on the authority of Faḍālah bin 'Ubaid that

> The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) heard a man supplicating in prayer. He did not glorify Allāh and neither did he invoke blessings on the Prophet (ﷺ). The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said, "He made haste." He then called him and said to him or to those around him, "If any one of you prays, he should commence by glorifying his Lord and praising Him; he should invoke peace and blessings on the Prophet (ﷺ) and thereafter he should supplicate to Allāh for anything he wishes."[3]

al-Ḥāfiẓ ibn al-Qayyim explains the causes that lead to ones sup-

[2] Bukhārī #6888 on the authority of ibn 'Abbās

[3] Abū Dāwūd Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 390 #1476; at-Tirmidhī #3476; an-Nasā'ī, vol. 3, pg. 44; Aḥmad #23937. at-Tirmidhī said it was ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ, al-Ḥākim #840 said it was ṣaḥīḥ with adh-Dhahabī agreeing, as did ibn Khuzaymah #709 and al-Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Abū Dāwūd* #1314

plication being answered in a beautiful way saying,

> When the servant combines in his supplication presence of the heart and its being attentive and devoting itself solely to Allāh, sincerely asking Him for the desired matter, doing so at one of the six times when the supplication is more likely to answered - these being:
>
> - The last third of the night.
> - At the time of the *adhān.*
> - Between the *adhān* and *iqāmah.*
> - At the ends of the prescribed prayers.
> - From the time the Imām ascends the pulpit to the time the prayer has finished on the day of *Jumu'ah.*
> - The last hour after the prayer of *'Aṣr.*
>
> Alongside this the servant appends fear and reverence in the heart, beseeching his Lord in a state of humility and submissiveness. He faces the *Qiblah* and is in a state of purity, he raises his hands to Allāh and begins by praising and extolling Him, then he invokes peace and blessings upon Muḥammad, His servant and Messenger (ﷺ). He precedes mentioning his need by seeking forgiveness from Allāh and then he earnestly and sincerely makes his request as one who is needy and impoverished, supplicating to Him out of hope and fear. He seeks the means of getting close to Him by mentioning His Names and Attributes and making the religion sincerely for Him Alone. Before making supplication he gives in charity. If all this is done then this supplication will never be rejected especially if the servant employs the supplications that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) informed us would be accepted or if his supplication in-

cludes mention of Allāh's Greatest Name.[4]

The words, ***"guide us"*** are in the imperative and when said by the servant directed to his Lord, are employed to express his dire need and ardent desire for what he is asking for, when the imperative form comes from Allāh, on the other hand, it is used to convey a command.[5]

8.2 Meaning of *hidāyah*

The word *hidāyah*, linguistically meaning direction and guidance, is used in two senses in the Qur'ān.

1. Guidance of clarification and direction, not taking into account whether the person to whom it has been clarified traverses the path of guidance or not.

In this respect is the saying of Allāh,

وَأَمَّا ثَمُودُ فَهَدَيْنَٰهُمْ فَٱسْتَحَبُّوا۟ ٱلْعَمَىٰ عَلَى ٱلْهُدَىٰ

«As for the Thamūd, We guided them but they preferred blindness over guidance»

[*Fuṣṣilat* (41): 17]

meaning: We made clear to them the True Way upon the tongue of our Prophet Ṣāliḥ, upon him and our Prophet be peace and blessings, despite the fact that they did not traverse this way as proven by His saying, ***"but they preferred blindness over guidance."***

[4] ibn al-Qayyim,, *ad-Dā' wa-d-Dwā'* pp. 13-14

[5] ibn 'Aṭiyyah, vol. 1, pg. 73; Abū Ḥayyān, vol. 1, pg. 146; See also ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' Fatāwā*, vol. 10.

In this respect also is His saying,

إِنَّا هَدَيْنَٰهُ ٱلسَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا ﴿٣﴾

«Indeed, We guided him, whether he be grateful or ungrateful»

[*al-Insān* (76): 3]

meaning: We have made clear to him the Way of Good and the Way of Evil as proven by His saying, ***"whether he be grateful or ungrateful."***

2. The specific type of guidance which is Allāh bestowing His grace upon the servant by making him accord to the Way of Truth.

With this respect is His sayings,

أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ هَدَى ٱللَّهُ ۖ فَبِهُدَىٰهُمُ ٱقْتَدِهْ

«They are the ones whom Allāh guided, so follow their guidance»

[*al-An'ām* (6): 90]

فَمَن يُرِدِ ٱللَّهُ أَن يَهْدِيَهُۥ يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُۥ لِلْإِسْلَٰمِ

«Whoever Allāh Wills to guide, He opens his breast to Islām»

[*al-An'ām* (6): 125]

When you come to understand this then any difficulties in understanding the following sayings of Allāh will also be removed,

إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِى مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَٰكِنَّ
ٱللَّهَ يَهْدِى مَن يَشَآءُ

«Indeed you [O Muḥammad] cannot guide those you love, but Allāh guides whom He wills»

[*al-Qaṣaṣ* (28): 56]

إِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِىٓ إِلَىٰ صِرَٰطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٥٢﴾

«And indeed you [O Muḥammad] are guiding [mankind] to the Straight Path»

[*ash-Shūrā* (42): 52]

because the aspect of guidance that has been negated is the specific guidance which is in the hands of Allāh Alone. As for the aspect of guidance that has been affirmed, it is the general guidance which is to clarify the truth; and the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) explained this to the extent that it became like a great white plain whose night is like its day.[6,7]

There is also a third sense to the word guidance that was mentioned by ibn al-Qayyim, and that is guidance on the Day of Judgement along the path to Paradise - this being the bridge leading to it. So the one who is guided in this life to the Straight Path will be guided to the straight path in the Hereafter that leads to His Paradise. His firmness on the path that Day will be dependant on how firmly he trod the Straight Path in this life.[8]

---

[6] Referring to the ḥadīth, "I have left you upon the great white plain, its night is like its day, none deviates from it except he who is destroyed."

Recorded by ibn Mājah, al-Ḥākim and Aḥmad on the authority of 'Irbāḍ ibn Sāriyah. Refer to *as-Ṣaḥīḥah* #937 for detailed documentation.

[7] ash-Shanqiṭī, vol. 1, pg. 38; vol. 10, pp. 6-7

[8] ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārij as-Sālikīn*, vol. 1, pg. 16

8.3 The Straight Path

A path, *Ṭarīq*, cannot be regarded to be a true path, *ṣirāt*, unless five conditions are met: that it is straight, that it leads to the intended goal, that it is close to the objective, that it is expansive enough to accommodate those traversing it, and that it has been sign-posted as being the actual route to the goal. The fact that this Path is straight proves that it is close for the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. The fact that is straight proves that it leads to the object. The fact that it has been appointed for all those who would traverse it shows that it is wide enough to accommodate them. The fact that the Path has been adjoined to the One who has blessed them shows that it has been so sign-posted.[9]

The phrase ***'The Straight Path,'*** here has the definitive article, *al*, adjoined to it to indicate that it is the most deserving of being described with the quality of being straight and a *ṣirāṭ*. Moreover, the servant is asking for direction to a specific path and not any path, that path that Allāh has erected for the inhabitants of Paradise. Now, because the servant knows full well that there is a path that belongs to Allāh and leads to Him, a path traversed by His Prophets and Messengers, he asks for direction to this specific path and hence it is befitting to adjoin it to the definitive article. In other places of the Qur'ān however, where the context is not one of supplicating and asking, rather one of describing or informing, we find that the phrase ***'Straight Path'*** has been left in the indefinite form such as

لِّيَغْفِرَ لَكَ ٱللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِن ذَنۢبِكَ
وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ وَيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُۥ عَلَيْكَ وَيَهْدِيَكَ صِرَٰطًا مُّسْتَقِيمًا ﴿٢﴾

[9] Ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārij as-Sālikīn*, vol. 1, pg. 16

«...so that Allāh may forgive you your earlier errors and any later ones, and complete His blessings upon you, and guide you to a Straight Path...»

[*al-Fatḥ* (48): 2]

وَإِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِيٓ إِلَىٰ صِرَٰطٖ مُّسْتَقِيمٖ ﴿٥٢﴾

«Truly you are guiding to a Straight Path.»

[*Shūrā* (42): 52]

وَهَدَيْنَٰهُمْ إِلَىٰ صِرَٰطٖ مُّسْتَقِيمٖ ﴿٨٧﴾

«We chose them and guided them to a Straight Path.»

[*al-An'ām* (6): 87]

قُلْ إِنَّنِي هَدَىٰنِي رَبِّيٓ
إِلَىٰ صِرَٰطٖ مُّسْتَقِيمٖ دِينٗا قِيَمٗا مِّلَّةَ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ حَنِيفٗاۚ

«Say: My Lord has guided me to a Straight Path, a well founded way of life, the religion of Ibrāhīm...»

[*al-An'ām* (6): 161][10]

The verse ***"Guide us to the Straight Path,"*** has been mentioned without the verb "Guide," being adjoined to the particle, *ilā*, or, *li*, rather it is linked directly to the object. When the verb "Guide" is adjoined to *ilā*, it lends the meaning of reaching the goal, when the verb is linked to *li*, it lends to the meaning of pointing out something and specifying it. When it is mentioned with neither of the two, it lends to the meaning of both. Hence the meaning of the verse would be: define this Path to us, explain it to us, direct us to

[10] Ibn al-Qayyim, *Badā'i al-Fawā'id*, vol. 1, pp. 252-256

it, and grant us the accord to follow it.[11]

The Straight Path is the path that the one journeying to Allāh traverses and it is none other than obedience to Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ). The *Salaf* have described the Straight Path in various ways but all of their definitions revolve around this basic fact:

1. The Book of Allāh as stated by 'Alī bin Abū Ṭālib, ibn Mas'ūd and others.
2. Islām as stated by ibn 'Abbās, ibn Mas'ūd, ad-Ḍaḥḥāk and others. Ibn Mas'ūd said that the Straight Path was wider than the distance between heaven and earth.
3. The Religion of Allāh other than which He will not accept as stated by ibn al-Ḥanafiyyah
4. The Prophet (ﷺ) and the two *Khalīfs* who followed him as stated by Abū al-'Āliyah and Ḥasan al-Baṣrī.
5. The truth as stated by Mujāhid.
6. The Path to Paradise as stated by Sa'īd bin Jubair.
7. The way of the Prophet (ﷺ) as stated by Bakr bin 'Abdullāh al-Muzanī.[12]

All of these opinions are correct and consistent. So whosoever follows Islām has followed the Prophet (ﷺ) and the two *Khalīfs* after him, i.e. Abū Bakr and 'Umar. Whosoever has followed them has followed the Truth and whosoever has followed the truth has followed the Qur'ān and whosoever has followed the Qur'ān has obeyed Allāh.[13]

---

[11] Ibn al-Qayyim, *Badā'i al-Fawā'id*, vol. 1, pp. 262

[12] ibn 'Aṭiyyah, vol. 1, pg. 74; ibn 'Ādil, vol. 2, pp. 207-208; Abū Ḥayyān, vol. 1, pg. 146; as-Suyūṭī, vol. 1, pp. 40-41; ash-Shawkānī, vol. 1, pg. 24

[13] ibn 'Aṭiyyah, vol. 1, pg. 74; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 50-51

Ibn al-Qayyim said,

> We will expound upon the Straight Path in a succinct manner for the people have explained it in various ways all of them revolving around one essential fact. The Straight Path is the path of Allāh which He has put in place to lead mankind to Him; there is no path to Him other than this one which He appointed upon the tongues of His Messengers. It is to single Him out alone for worship and to single out His Messengers alone for obedience. Therefore none should commit *shirk* in His worship just as none should commit *shirk* in the following of His Messenger (ﷺ); one should purify his *tawḥīd* and purify his following of the Messenger (ﷺ), this is the full import of the testification that, 'None has the right to be worshipped save Allāh and Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh.' All of the various explanations given to the Straight Path fall under these two principles. You must love Him with all your heart, you must try to please Him to the utmost of your ability; there should not be any area of your heart except that it is overflowing with love of Him and you should have no desire except to please Him. The first point is realised through actualising, 'None has the right to be worshipped save Allāh' and the second point is realised through actualising, 'Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh.' This is guidance and the religion of truth, this is knowing the truth and acting upon it, this in turn is knowing what He sent His Messenger with and living by it. All definitions revolve around this essential concept. Sahl bin 'Abdullāh said, 'stick to the narrations and Sunnah for I fear that soon will come a time that when the Prophet (ﷺ) and the importance of following him in everything is mentioned, the people would censure the person who says this, cause others to flee from him, disassociate them-

> selves from him, humiliate him and disgrace him.'[14]

at-Tirmidhī records on the authority of Nawwās bin Sam'ān that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

> Allāh has set forth the following as a parable: there is a road that leads straight to the destination. On either side of the road there is a wall in which there are open doors with curtains hanging on them. From the remote end of the road, a voice calls, 'Proceed straight and do not turn aside.' Whenever someone intends to lift a curtain from the door another voice calls from above, 'Beware! Do not lift the curtain, otherwise you will be lured inside.'
>
> The Prophet (ﷺ) explained the parable by saying that the straight path is Islām, the walls are the limits imposed by Allāh, the open doors are the things that he has prohibited, the voice which calls from the end of the road is the Qur'ān and the voice which calls from above is Allāh's monitor in the heart of every believer.[15]

From the above verse we also learn that the Straight Path is one path and not many, indeed anything that deviates from it is to be regarded as misguidance.[16] ash-Shāṭibī explains this further by saying,

---

[14] 'Abdur-Raḥmān Āli ash-Shaykh, *Fatḥ al-Majīd Sharḥ Kitāb at-Tawḥīd*, pg. 24 who summarised this from ibn al-Qayyim, *Badā'i al-Fawā'id*, vol. 1, pp. 280+

[15] at-Tirmidhī #76, and Aḥmad #17634, 17636. It was declared ḥasan gharīb by at-Tirmidhī and ṣaḥīḥ by al-Ḥākim #245 with adh-Dhahabī agreeing and al-Albānī #3887.

[16] ibn al-Qayyim, pg. 14

وَأَنَّ هَٰذَا صِرَٰطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَٱتَّبِعُوهُ ۖ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا۟ ٱلسُّبُلَ
فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَن سَبِيلِهِۦ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصَّىٰكُم بِهِۦ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٥٣﴾

«And verily, this is my Straight Path, so follow it, and follow not [other] paths, for they will separate you away from His Path. This He has ordained for you that you may become pious»

[*al-An'ām* (6): 153]

The Straight Path is the path to which Allāh has named and that is the Sunnah. The other paths are the paths of the people of disagreement who deviate from the Straight Path, and they are the People of Innovation. The intended meaning here is not the 'paths of disobedience' because no one makes disobedience a path that he continuously treads upon - in imitation of and resemblance to the legislation, but rather this description is specifically for the newly invented innovations.

In what Ismā'īl has narrated from Sulaimān bin Ḥarb lies evidence for this: Ḥammād bin Zaid narrated to us; from 'Āṣim bin Bahdalah; from Abū Wā'il; from 'Abdullāh [ibn 'Abbās] who said,

'One Day the Messenger (ﷺ) drew for us a long, straight line' and then Sulaimān drew for us a long, straight line, 'And then he drew lines to its right and to its left and then said, "This is the Path of Allāh." Then he drew lines to its right and to its left and said, "These are different paths, upon each of these ways is a devil calling to it", and then he recited the verse,

وَأَنَّ هَٰذَا صِرَٰطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَٱتَّبِعُوهُ ۖ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا۟ ٱلسُّبُلَ

«And verily, this is my Straight Path, so follow it, and follow not [other] paths...»

[*al-An'ām* (6): 153]

meaning these paths

فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَن سَبِيلِهِۦ

«...for they will separate you away from His Path»

[*al-An'ām* (6): 153]'

Bakr bin 'Alā said, 'He meant the devils amongst men and these [other paths] are the innovations and Allāh knows best.'

The ḥadīth has been reported in many ways.

'Umar bin Salamah al-Ḥamdānī said, "We were sitting in the circle of Ibn Mas'ūd in the *Masjid*, which had been plain land after it had been covered with gravel. 'Ubaydullāh bin 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, who had just returned from an expedition asked him, 'What is the Straight Path O Abū 'Abdur-Raḥmān?' He replied, 'By the Lord of the Ka'bah, it is that which your father was firmly established upon until he entered Paradise' and he swore firmly upon that three times. Then he drew a line in the ground with his hand and also drew lines to either side of it and said, 'Your Prophet (ﷺ) left you upon this end and its other end is in Paradise. So whoever remains steadily upon it will enter Paradise and whoever takes any of these lines will be destroyed.'"

In another narration [the wording is], "O Abū 'Abdur-Raḥmān, what is the straight path?" He replied, "The Messenger (ﷺ) left us upon the nearest end of the line and its other end is in Paradise. And to its left and right are roads in which there are men who invite those who

pass by them, saying, 'Come this way! Come this way!' So whoever is taken by them to those paths will end up in Hellfire and whoever remains steadfast upon the great path will end up, through it, in Paradise." Then ibn Mas'ūd recited,

وَأَنَّ هَٰذَا صِرَٰطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَٱتَّبِعُوهُ ۖ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا۟ ٱلسُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَن سَبِيلِهِۦ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصَّىٰكُم بِهِۦ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٥٣﴾

«And verily, this is my Straight Path, so follow it, and follow not [other] paths, for they will separate you away from His Path. This He has ordained for you that you may become pious»

[*al-An'ām* (6): 153]

Mujāhid said about the saying of Allāh:

وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا۟ ٱلسُّبُلَ

«...and follow not [other] paths»

[*al-An'ām* (6): 153]

[That it refers to] innovations and doubts.

'Abdur-Raḥmān bin Mahdi said, "Mālik bin Anas had been asked about the Sunnah to which he replied, 'It is whatever has no other name for it except 'The Sunnah' and he recited,

وَأَنَّ هَٰذَا صِرَٰطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَٱتَّبِعُوهُ ۖ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا۟ ٱلسُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَن سَبِيلِهِۦ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصَّىٰكُم بِهِۦ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٥٣﴾

«And verily, this is my Straight Path, so follow it, and follow not [other] paths, for they will separate you away from His Path»

[*al-An'ām* (6): 153]"

Bakr bin 'Alā said, "He means - if Allāh wills - the ḥadīth of ibn Mas'ūd that the Messenger (ﷺ) drew a line..." and he mentioned the ḥadīth.

This explanation shows that the verse includes all the different paths of innovation and does not specify one innovation over others. Also amongst the verses [that are related to the censure of innovation] is the saying of Allāh the Exalted,

وَعَلَى ٱللَّهِ قَصْدُ ٱلسَّبِيلِ وَمِنْهَا جَآئِرٌ وَلَوْ شَآءَ لَهَدَىٰكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ۝٩

«And upon Allāh is the responsibility to explain the Straight Path but there are ways that turn aside. And had He willed, He would have guided you all»

[*an-Naḥl* (16): 9]

The explained path is the Path of Truth and that which is other than it, turns away from the truth - and these are the paths of innovations and misguidance - may Allāh protect us, by His Excellence, from travelling upon them. It is sufficient for whatever turns away [from the Truth] that it is warned against and the verse contains a warning and a prohibition [of taking other paths that deviate from the Truth].

Ibn Waddāḥ mentioned that "'Āsim bin Bahdalah was questioned: 'O Abū Bakr, have you considered the saying of Allāh, the Exalted,

وَعَلَى ٱللَّهِ قَصْدُ ٱلسَّبِيلِ وَمِنْهَا جَآئِرٌ وَلَوْ شَآءَ لَهَدَىٰكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ۝٩

«And upon Allāh is the responsibility to explain the Straight Path but there are ways that turn aside. And had He willed, He would have guided you all»
[*an-Naḥl* (16): 9]

He replied, 'Abū Wā'il informed us; from 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd saying, "'Abdullāh bin Mas'ūd drew a straight line and drew lines to its right and to its left and then said, 'The Messenger (ﷺ) drew just like this. He said about the straight line, 'This is the path of Allāh' and about the lines to its right and left he said, 'These are different ways, upon each of these ways is a devil calling to it.' Allāh the Exalted said,

وَأَنَّ هَٰذَا صِرَٰطِى مُسْتَقِيمًا فَٱتَّبِعُوهُ

«And verily, this is my Straight Path, so follow it...»
[*al-An'ām* (6): 153]

to the end of the verse.'"

at-Tustarī said, "Explanation of the path - that is the path of the Sunnah; 'Ways that turn aside' - meaning to the Hellfire and they are the sects and innovations."

Mujāhid said, "Explanation of the path - meaning the one who is justly balanced between exaggeration and negligence," and this shows that the one who turns aside is one who commits excesses or is negligent, and both of them are amongst the descriptions of the innovations."

From 'Alī (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*), that he used to read the

verse, ***'wa minkum jā'ir...'*** (and amongst you is one that turns aside). They said, "He means by that [from] this nation."

So it is as if this verse along with the one before it have come with the same meaning.[17]

8.4 Allāh is on the Straight Path

Allāh, Exalted is He says,

إِنَّ رَبِّي عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ

«...My Lord is on the Straight Path»

[*Hūd* (11): 56]

وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا رَّجُلَيْنِ
أَحَدُهُمَا أَبْكَمُ لَا يَقْدِرُ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ كَلٌّ عَلَىٰ
مَوْلَاهُ أَيْنَمَا يُوَجِّههُّ لَا يَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي هُوَ وَمَن
يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٧٦﴾

«Allāh makes another metaphor: two men, one of them deaf and dumb, unable to do anything, a burden to his master, no matter where he directs him he brings no good, is he the same as someone who commands justice and is on a straight path?»

[*an-Naḥl* (16): 76]

This latter parable has been propounded for the idols that are worshipped, they cannot hear, speak or comprehend, they are a burden upon the one who worships them, for the idol needs its wor-

[17] ash-Shāṭibī, *al-I'tiṣām*, vol. 1, pp. 40-45 translation by Abū 'Iyāḍ and modified.

shipper to carry it, tend to it, care for it etc. How is it then possible think that worshipping these is in any way comparable to the worship of Allāh who commands justice and *tawḥīd*?! He is upon the Straight Path in speech and action, all that He says is the very truth and true guidance, all that He does is pure wisdom, justice, mercy and nothing but benefit; nothing that even resembles evil can come close to His speech and action.[18]

8.5 Why supplicate for guidance to the Straight Path?

If it is asked why is one supplicating for guidance to the Straight Path when a Muslim is already regarded to be on the Straight Path? Shaykh al-Islām ibn Taymiyyah says,

> ...The case mentioned above is similar to what some of them ask concerning His saying, ***"Guide us to the Straight Path"*** [*al-Fātiḥah* (1): 6] saying: 'Allāh has already guided the believer, so what benefit is there in seeking guidance?' Then some of them reply by saying that the meaning is 'Keep us firm upon guidance' as the Arab would say to the one who is asleep, 'Sleep until I come to you'. Others say that the meaning is, 'Keep our hearts firm upon the guidance' and that the request for firmness has been omitted. Yet others from amongst them say that it means, 'Increase me in guidance.'
>
> This question really occurs due to the absence of their pondering the Straight Path to which the servant seeks guidance to, for the meaning [of the verse] is [seeking guidance to] act according to what Allāh ordered, and leaving what He forbade in all matters.

[18] ibn al-Qayyim, pg. 18

This is because the person, even if he has believed that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh and that the Qur'ān is the truth in a general way, is commonly in need of knowledge of that which would benefit him and harm him. He is in need of knowledge concerning what he has been commanded to do and forbidden from doing in the finer aspects of his life and in those areas of which he has no knowledge. [Not only this but we find that] that which he does have knowledge of, he does not put the greater part of it to practice! Assuming that all of the commands and prohibitions contained in the Qur'ān and Sunnah have reached him, then the Qur'ān and Sunnah contain laws that are general and universal for which it is not possible to specify to every individual person - therefore the person has been commanded due to the likes of this to ask for guidance to the Straight Path.

Guidance to the Straight Path includes all of the following matters: cognisance of what the Messenger (ﷺ) came with in detail, cognisance of what comes under his general orders and concern for acting according to ones knowledge, for indeed just having knowledge is not a cause for attaining guidance if one does not act according to his knowledge. This is why He said to His Prophet after the treaty of *Hudaybiyyah*,

إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُّبِينًا ﴿١﴾ لِّيَغْفِرَ لَكَ ٱللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِن ذَنۢبِكَ
وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ وَيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُۥ عَلَيْكَ وَيَهْدِيَكَ صِرَٰطًا مُّسْتَقِيمًا ﴿٢﴾

«Indeed We have given you a manifest victory. That Allāh may forgive you your sins of the past and future, complete His Favour upon you, and guide you on a Straight Path»

[*Fatḥ* (48): 1-2]

and He said with respect to Mūsā and Harūn,

وَءَاتَيْنَٰهُمَا ٱلْكِتَٰبَ ٱلْمُسْتَبِينَ ﴿١١٧﴾ وَهَدَيْنَٰهُمَا ٱلصِّرَٰطَ ٱلْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿١١٨﴾

«and We gave them the clear Scripture, and guided them to the Right Path»

[*as-Ṣāffāt* (37): 117-118]

The Muslims have differed as to what Allāh willed from the textual matters - matters of knowledge, belief and action while all of them are agreed that Muḥammad is the truth and the Qur'ān is the truth. If all of them were to have attained guidance to the Straight Path in totality, they would never have differed. Furthermore the majority of those who know what Allāh has ordered disobey Him and do not follow His Way. If they were guided to the Straight Path in these matters then they certainly would have performed what they had been commanded to do, and left what they had been forbidden from. As for those whom Allāh guided from amongst this nation until they became from the God-Fearing Friends of Allāh, the greatest reason for this was their supplicating to Allāh with this supplication (guide us to the Straight Path) in every prayer along with the knowledge of their continuous need of Allāh that He guide them on the Straight Path. So due to their continually saying this supplication and their acknowledging their continuous need of Him they became God-Fearing Friends of Allāh. Sahl bin 'Abdullāh at-Tustarī said, 'There is not route between a servant and Allāh closer to Him then need.'

The one who has attained guidance in the past is in need of guidance in the future, this is the real meaning behind the saying of those who say that it means: 'Establish us and guide us to being firm upon the Straight Path.'

> The opinion of those who say that it means: 'Increase us in guidance' includes what has preceded. But all that has been stated refers to His guidance to the Straight Path that is to be granted in the future, for indeed action in the future is upon knowledge that is not yet attained. And the person is not considered to be one who is guided until he acts according to his knowledge in the future, but it is possible that this knowledge not be there in the future, rather it could be removed from the heart, and if it still be there it is also possible that it not be acted upon. Therefore all of mankind is in dire need of this supplication, this is why Allāh made it obligatory upon them in every prayer and they are not in need of any other supplication as they are of this one. When guidance is obtained to the Straight Path then help, provision and all of the happiness that the soul seeks are obtained [from Allāh]. Allāh knows best.[19]

Allāh commands His servants to supplicate,

رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ
لَنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنتَ ٱلْوَهَّابُ ﴿٨﴾

> **«Our Lord! Let not our hearts deviate after You have guided us and grant us mercy from Yourself. Indeed You are the Bestower»**
>
> [*Āli 'Imrān* (3): 8]

[19] ibn Taymiyyah, 'Diseases of the Heart and their Cures' Eng. Trans., pp. 44-47. The original text is to be found in his *Majmū' Fatāwā*, vol. 10, pp. 91-138 . [Daar us-Sunnah Publishers 2003]

Refer also to ibn 'Aṭiyyah, vol. 1, pg. 74-75; al-Baghawī, vol. 1, pg. 54; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1; pg. 52, al-Ālūsī, vol. 1, pg. 126

8.6 The Path of those whom You have favoured

After the servant has requested guidance to the Straight Path, Allāh then proceeds to clarify further what this Straight Path is, by pointing out those who traverse it, and this in turn is explained in greater detail in *Sūrah an-Nisā'*,

فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا۟
فِىٓ أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا۟ تَسْلِيمًا ﴿٦٥﴾
وَلَوْ أَنَّا كَتَبْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ أَنِ ٱقْتُلُوٓا۟ أَنفُسَكُمْ أَوِ ٱخْرُجُوا۟ مِن
دِيَـٰرِكُم مَّا فَعَلُوهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ مِّنْهُمْ ۖ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ فَعَلُوا۟ مَا يُوعَظُونَ
بِهِۦ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ وَأَشَدَّ تَثْبِيتًا ﴿٦٦﴾ وَإِذًا لَّـَٔاتَيْنَـٰهُم مِّن
لَّدُنَّآ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٦٧﴾ وَلَهَدَيْنَـٰهُمْ صِرَٰطًا مُّسْتَقِيمًا ﴿٦٨﴾
وَمَن يُطِعِ ٱللَّهَ وَٱلرَّسُولَ فَأُو۟لَـٰٓئِكَ مَعَ ٱلَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِم
مِّنَ ٱلنَّبِيِّـۧنَ وَٱلصِّدِّيقِينَ وَٱلشُّهَدَآءِ وَٱلصَّـٰلِحِينَ ۚ وَحَسُنَ
أُو۟لَـٰٓئِكَ رَفِيقًا ﴿٦٩﴾

«But no by Your Lord! They cannot have faith until they make you [O Muḥammad] judge in all disputes between them and find in themselves no resistance to your decisions, and accept them with full submission. And if We had ordered them [saying]: 'Kill [the guilty ones amongst] yourselves or leave your homes' very few of them would have done it. If they had done what they were told, it

would have been better for them and would have strengthened their [faith]. Indeed we would then have bestowed upon them a great reward from Ourselves and we would have guided them to a Straight Way. And whosoever obeys Allāh and the Messenger, they will be in the company of those upon whom Allāh has bestowed His favour: the Prophets, the sincerely truthful, the martyrs and the righteous. What an excellent company these are!»

[*an-Nisā'* (4): 65-69]

Ibn 'Abbās said in commentary to this verse,

> [Those who you have favoured] by making them obedient to You and worship You from the Angels, the Prophets, the sincerely truthful, the martyrs and the righteous. This is like what our Lord, Exalted is He has said, ***"They will be in the company of those upon whom Allāh has bestowed His favour: ..."***

Allāh, Exalted is He, also says,

أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ هَدَى ٱللَّهُۖ فَبِهُدَىٰهُمُ ٱقْتَدِهْۗ

«They are the ones Allāh has guided, so be guided by their guidance»

[*al-An'ām* (6): 90]

In explaining to us the Straight Path by directing us to those who traverse it, lies an indication that we should be careful of the company we keep, this is a principle repeatedly taught to us by the Prophet (ﷺ),

> A man is upon the religion of his close friend, so look

carefully as to who you take as your close friend.[20]

> The example of a good companion and a bad companion is like the seller of musk and the blacksmith. As for the seller of musk, either he will give some to you, or you will try and buy it from him, or its scent will rub off on you. As for the blacksmith, either your clothes will be burned or his rancid odour will rub off on you.[21]

> A person will be with those he loves.[22]

Moreover by directing our attention to those who traverse the Straight Path one is comforted and no longer feels lonely and isolated; for those traversing this Path, amongst man, are few. Some of the Salaf would say, 'Follow the path of truth and do not despair because of the few who traverse it, beware of the path of misguidance and do not be deceived by the many who traverse it.' So each time one feels isolated, look to those who have traversed the path before you, those who have been favoured, take comfort in that, keep your gaze directed at them, your desire being to aspire to their company, and let not your desire be distracted to other than them; for they can never bring you any benefit before Allāh.[23]

This verse constitutes clear proof that the obedience of Allāh, Exalted is He, can only come about by Allāh favouring us and His

---

[20] at-Tirmidhī #2378 and Abū Dāwūd #4813 on the authority of Abū Hurayrah. at-Tirmidhī said it was ḥasan as did al-Albānī #3545, an-Nawawī, *Riyāḍ as-Ṣāliḥīn* #371 said the isnād was ṣaḥīḥ.

[21] Bukhārī #5534 and Muslim #2628 on the authority of Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī

[22] Bukhārī #6170 and Muslim #2641 on the authority of Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī

[23] Ibn al-Qayyim, pg. 22

granting us His divine accord.[24] Allāh, Exalted is He says,

قُل لِّلَّهِ ٱلْمَشْرِقُ وَٱلْمَغْرِبُ ۚ يَهْدِى مَن يَشَآءُ إِلَىٰ صِرَٰطٍ
مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٤٢﴾

«Say: Both east and west belong to Allāh, He guides whoever He wills to a straight path»

[*al-Baqarah* (2): 143]

﴿٢١٣﴾ كَانَ ٱلنَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَٰحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلنَّبِيِّـۧنَ مُبَشِّرِينَ
وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنزَلَ مَعَهُمُ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ بِٱلْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ ٱلنَّاسِ
فِيمَا ٱخْتَلَفُوا۟ فِيهِ ۚ وَمَا ٱخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُوهُ مِنۢ بَعْدِ
مَا جَآءَتْهُمُ ٱلْبَيِّنَٰتُ بَغْيًۢا بَيْنَهُمْ ۖ فَهَدَى ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟
لِمَا ٱخْتَلَفُوا۟ فِيهِ مِنَ ٱلْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِهِۦ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ يَهْدِى مَن يَشَآءُ إِلَىٰ
صِرَٰطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٢١٣﴾

«Mankind was a single community. Then Allāh sent Prophets bringing good news and giving warning, and with them He sent down the Book with truth to decide between people regarding their differences. Only those who were given it differed about it, after clear signs had come to them, envying one another. Then, by His permission, Allāh guided those who had faith to the truth about which they differed. Allāh guides whoever He wills to a straight path»

[*al-Baqarah* (2): 213]

i.e. Allāh sent the Messengers with scripture, but the people

[24] at-Ṭabarī, vol. 1, pg. 107

starting differing over it by way of envy and obstinacy, so Allāh graced the believers and, ***"guided those who had faith"***, the ruling of truth came ***"and Allāh guides whoever He wills to a straight path."*** In this respect Allāh, Exalted is He also says,

يَمُنُّونَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ أَسْلَمُوا ۖ قُل لَّا تَمُنُّوا عَلَيَّ إِسْلَامَكُم ۖ بَلِ اللَّهُ
يَمُنُّ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ هَدَاكُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

«They think they have done you a favour by becoming Muslims! Say, 'Do not consider your Islām a favour to me. No indeed! It is Allāh who has favoured you by guiding you to faith if you are telling the truth.'»

[*al-Ḥujurāt* (49): 17]

وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِم مِّنْ غِلٍّ
تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ ۖ وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا لِهَٰذَا
وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلَا أَنْ هَدَانَا اللَّهُ ۖ لَقَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُ رَبِّنَا بِالْحَقِّ ۖ
وَنُودُوا أَن تِلْكُمُ الْجَنَّةُ أُورِثْتُمُوهَا بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

«...We will strip away rancour in their hearts. Rivers will flow under them and they will say, 'Praise be to Allāh who has guided us to this! We would not have been guided had Allāh not guided us. The Messengers of our Lord came with the truth.' It will be proclaimed to them, 'This is your Garden which you inherited for what you did.'»

[*al-A'rāf* (7): 43][25]

This truth is emphasised by the explicit mention of ***'You'*** in the

[25] Sālim, vol. 1, pg. 24

phrase *'You have favoured.'* By the servant saying this, he is reminding himself that Allāh is the One who has blessed him with guidance and that Allāh is the One who should be thanked for this, as such he has combined the two aspects that are mentioned in,

فَٱذْكُرُونِىٓ أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَٱشْكُرُوا۟ لِى وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ ﴿١٥٢﴾

«Remember Me - I will remember You. Give thanks to Me and do not be ungrateful.»

[*al-Baqarah* (2): 152][26]

at-Taftāzānī ash-Shāfi'ī said that this chapter directs us towards all favours that one is granted. All favours revolve around four matters: the first creation and continuation and the second creation and continuation in the Hereafter. ***"All praise and thanks are due to Allāh, Lord of the world"*** points one to the blessing of our own creation in this life. ***"The All-Merciful, the Most Merciful"*** points one to the blessings of Allāh that allow us to survive in this world. ***"Master of the Day of Judgment"*** points one to the second creation and ***"You Alone we worship"*** points us to the second continuation, for the benefits and blessings of worship are truly seen in the next life. There are four more chapters in the Qur'ān that commence with mention of praise, and all of these discuss one of these four blessings.[27]

[26] Ibn al-Qayyim, *Badā'i al-Fawā'id*, vol. 1, pp. 260

[27] al-Baqā'ī, vol. 1, pg. 20. The four chapters being *al-An'ām* (6), *al-Kahf* (18), *Saba'* (35) and *Fāṭir* (35)

8.7 Optimism in Supplication

By asking to be guided to the Path of those who have been favoured by Allāh, the servant is asking to be in the company of the best of creation, in this he is being optimistic in his supplication.[28] This is the state we are recommended to be in for the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) taught us,

> When you supplicate, do not say, 'If You will'. Rather be resolute in your asking and let your longing be great, for nothing that Allāh grants is too great for Him.[29]

> Paradise has one hundred levels, the distance between each level is as the distance between heaven and earth. Firdaws is the highest level of Paradise and from it sprout its four rivers and above it is the Throne. So when you ask, ask for Firdaws.[30]

---

[28] al-Baqā'ī, vol. 1, pg. 20

[29] Muslim #4838

[30] at-Tirmidhī #2531 and Aḥmad #22695 on the authority of 'Ubādah ibn as-Ṣāmit. It was declared ṣaḥīḥ by al-Albānī #4244

Similar aḥādīth are recorded by at-Tirmidhī #2530 on the authority of Mu'ādh; al-Bazzār #3513, 3514 on the authority of Samurah; al-Bazzār #3512 on the authority of 'Irbaḍ

8.8 Further observations

ash-Shanqīṭī makes the following additional observations concerning this verse:

1. The correctness of the *khalīfate* of Abū Bakr as-Ṣiddīq (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) can be derived from this noble verse.

This is because he is included amongst those whom Allāh has commanded us, in the Great Qur'ān and the Seven Oft-Repeated Verses - I mean *al-Fātiḥah*, to ask Him that He guide us to their path; thus indicating that their path is the Straight Path.

This lies in His saying, ***"Guide us to the Straight Path, the Path of those whom You have favoured"*** and He explained who these favoured people were and included amongst them the *Ṣiddīqīn*. [The Messenger (ﷺ)] explained that Abū Bakr (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) was from amongst the *Ṣiddīqīn*, so it becomes clear that he is included amongst those whom Allāh has favoured - those whom Allāh has commanded us to ask Him to guide us to their path. Therefore there remains no doubt that Abū Bakr as-Ṣiddīq was upon the Straight Path and that his *khilāfate* was correct.[31]

2. You have come to know that the *Ṣiddīqīn* are from those whom Allāh has favoured and He has made clear that Maryam the daughter of 'Imrān was a *ṣiddīqa* in His saying,

وَأُمُّهُۥ صِدِّيقَةٌ

«...and his mother was a *ṯiddīqa*»

[*al-Mā'idah* (5): 75]

[31] ibn 'Ādil, vol. 2, pg. 219; ar-Rāzī, vol. 1, pg. 221

So is Maryam included in His saying, ***"Those whom you have favoured"*** or not?

The answer: whether or not she is included amongst them is dependent upon a foundational principle that has a well-known dispute over it. This is: does the sound masculine plural and its likes that occur in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah include the feminine gender in all cases or only in those cases for which there is specific evidence?

A group of scholars took to the opinion that it does - so according to them Maryam is included in the above verse. These scholars depended upon two proofs:

1. The consensus of the people of the Arabic Language that the masculine gender takes prevalence over the feminine.[32]

2. There a number of verses which prove that the females are included in the sound masculine plural, like His saying concerning Maryam herself,

وَصَدَّقَتْ بِكَلِمَٰتِ رَبِّهَا وَكُتُبِهِۦ وَكَانَتْ مِنَ ٱلْقَٰنِتِينَ ﴿١٢﴾

> **«She testified to the truth of the words of her Lord and His Books, and she was of those obedient to Allāh»**[33]
>
> [*at-Taḥrīm* (66): 12]

and His saying concerning the wife of al-'Azīz,

[32] For example a mixed gathering of males and females would be referred to by using the male plural not the female plural even if their be more females than males.

[33] *Qānitīn* - a sound masculine plural

يُوسُفُ أَعْرِضْ عَنْ
هَٰذَا وَٱسْتَغْفِرِي لِذَنۢبِكِ إِنَّكِ كُنتِ مِنَ ٱلْخَاطِـِٔينَ

«O Yusuf! Turn away from this! [O Woman!] Ask forgiveness for your sin, indeed your were of the sinful»[34]

[*Yūsuf* (12): 29]

and His saying concerning Bilqīs,

وَصَدَّهَا مَا كَانَت تَّعْبُدُ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ إِنَّهَا كَانَتْ مِن قَوْمٍ كَٰفِرِينَ

«And that which she used to worship besides Allāh has prevented her [from Islām], for she was of a disbelieving people»[35]

[*an-Naml* (27): 43]

and His saying,

قُلْنَا ٱهْبِطُوا۟ مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا

«We said: get down[36] all of you from this»

[*al-Baqarah* (2): 38]

this address includes Ḥawā' by consensus.

The majority of scholars, however, took to the opinion that the females are not included in the sound masculine plural unless there is specific evidence. They depended upon a number of verses like His sayings,

---

[34] *Khāṭi'in* - a sound masculine plural

[35] *Qawmin Kāfirīn*

[36] *ihbiṭū*

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ
وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْقَانِتَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ
وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَاشِعِينَ وَالْخَاشِعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ
وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّائِمِينَ وَالصَّائِمَاتِ وَالْحَافِظِينَ
فُرُوجَهُمْ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا
وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُم مَّغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٣٥﴾

«Indeed the male Muslims and the female Muslims, the male believers and the female believers...Allāh has prepared for them a forgiveness and a great reward»

[*al-Aḥzāb* (33): 35]

قُل لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ
ذَٰلِكَ أَزْكَىٰ لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

«Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and protect their private parts. That is purer for them...»

[*an-Nūr* (24): 30]

following this with,

وَقُل لِّلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ
يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ

«...and tell the believing women to lower their gaze and protect their private parts»

[*an-Nūr* (24): 31]

So their following the mention of men indicates that they are not included amongst them. They replied to the proponents of the first opinion by saying that the fact that the masculine gender takes prevalence over the feminine is not a matter of dispute. What is disputed is whether the masculine plural includes the females in every case. They further replied to the verses [used by the first group] by saying that it is known by the context of these verses and their meanings that the females are included in the male plural - and that their inclusion in the male plural in the case of their being an evidence for this is not contended.

So according to this opinion, Maryam is not included in the verse.[37]

8.9 The position of this verse and Summary

After asking Allāh for help, the servant then proceeds to mention the greatest matter for which he is need of help, guidance to, and on, the Straight Path.[38] We are told that guidance to this Straight Path cannot occur unless Allāh favours us, ***"the Path of those You have favoured"*** and that this path lies in firmly adhering to what the Messengers came with.[39]

This verse also refutes the Qadariyyah, Mu'tazilah and the Imāmiyyah because in their view, the desire of a person is sufficient in his being able to do whatever he wants, because man is the creator of his own actions, hence he is no need of aid from His Lord in this. This verse proves this opinion is wrong in that Allāh has obli-

---

[37] ash-Shanqīṭī, vol. 1, pg. 33-35

[38] al-Bayḍāwī, vol. 1, pg. 69; al-Ālūsī, vol. 1, pg. 126

[39] al-Baqā'ī, vol. 1, pg. 18

gated that we ask Him to guide us to the actions of those who traverse the straight path, and that we repeat this request in every unit of every prayer. If the affair was truly in the hands of the person himself, as they claim, there would be no need for this supplication.[40]

[40] at-Ṭabarī, vol. 1, pg. 103; al-Qurṭubī, vol. 1, pg. 104

CHAPTER IX

غَيْرِ ٱلْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا ٱلضَّآلِّينَ ۝٧

Not [the path] of those who have earned [Your] anger, nor those who have gone astray

9.1 The meaning of *ghaḍab* and *ḍalāl*

al-Ghaḍab linguistically means anger, it is the opposite of pleasure (*riḍā*) and one of the Attributes of Allāh.[1] *Maghḍūb* refer to the objects of anger.

Ḍalāl linguistically means to divert from the intended goal or to diverge from the true path and it is the opposite of guidance. Its essential meaning is disintegration and dissolution,[2] as such it is

---

[1] al-Ālūsi, vol.1, pp. 129

[2] Abū Ḥayyān, vol. 1, pg. 148; al-Ālūsi, vol.1, pp. 129

said 'the milk *ḍalla* in the water' when it is mixed such that it disappears. In this respect also is His saying,

وَقَالُوٓا۟ أَءِذَا ضَلَلْنَا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ

«And they say: when we become *ṭalal* in the earth are we then to be in a new creation?»

[*as-Sajdah* (32): 10]

Meaning when we die and disappear into the earth by becoming dust. *ad-Ḍāllīn* refers to those gone astray.[3]

9.2 Who does this verse refer to?

at-Tirmidhī records on the authority of 'Adī bin Ḥātim who said,

> I asked the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) about Allāh's saying about, *"Those who have earned [Your] anger"*, and He said, "It refers to the Jews." I then asked about, *"Those who have gone astray"* and he said, "The Christians are those who have gone astray."[4]

The Jews and the Christians, even though both of them are misguided and both of them have Allāh's anger on them, the anger is specified to the Jews because the Jews knew the truth, rejected it and deliberately came with falsehood. Therefore the anger of Allāh being upon them was the description most befitting them. The Christians were ignorant, not knowing the truth, so misguidance was the description most befitting them.

[3] ash-Shawkānī, vol. 1, pg. 25

[4] Reported by at-Tirmidhī #2953, 2954 and Aḥmad #19381. It was declared ṣaḥīḥ by ibn Ḥibbān #6246, 7206, 7365 and al-Albānī #8202

Refer also to at-Ṭabarī, vol. 1, pp. 110-111, 113-115; as-Suyūṭī, vol. 1, pp. 42-43

This is further proven by the sayings of Allāh concerning the Jews,

فَبَآءُو بِغَضَبٍ عَلَىٰ غَضَبٍ ۚ وَلِلْكَٰفِرِينَ

> **«So they have drawn on themselves anger upon anger»**
>
> [*al-Baqarah* (2): 90]

قُلْ هَلْ أُنَبِّئُكُم بِشَرٍّ مِّن ذَٰلِكَ مَثُوبَةً عِندَ ٱللَّهِ ۚ مَن لَّعَنَهُ ٱللَّهُ وَغَضِبَ عَلَيْهِ

> **«Say: shall I inform you of something worse than that, regarding the recompense from Allāh: those (Jews) who incurred the curse of Allāh and His anger»**
>
> [*al-Mā'idah* (5): 60]

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱتَّخَذُوا۟ ٱلْعِجْلَ سَيَنَالُهُمْ غَضَبٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَذِلَّةٌ

> **«Indeed those who took the calf (for worship), anger from their Lord and humiliation will come upon them»**
>
> [*al-A'rāf* (7): 152]

and Allāh said concerning the Christians,

قُلْ يَٰٓأَهْلَ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ لَا تَغْلُوا۟ فِى دِينِكُمْ غَيْرَ ٱلْحَقِّ
وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوٓا۟ أَهْوَآءَ قَوْمٍ قَدْ ضَلُّوا۟ مِن قَبْلُ وَأَضَلُّوا۟
كَثِيرًا وَضَلُّوا۟ عَن سَوَآءِ ٱلسَّبِيلِ ﴿٧٧﴾

«...And do not follow the vain desires of people (i.e. the Christians) who went astray in times gone by, and misled many, and have themselves strayed from the Straight Path»

[*al-Mā'idah* (5): 77]

Other opinions have been voiced concerning the meaning of this verse,[5] but the meaning mentioned above takes precedence and is undoubtedly correct as it has been reported from the Prophet (ﷺ) himself.[6]

9.3 The position of the verse in the *Sūrah* and Summary

It is by their opposites that things become clear, and hence we are taught about the Straight Path from the perspective of those who traverse it and then from the perspective of those who do not.[7] Punishment and vengeance, the consequences of anger, is the opposite of favour and grace. It is for this reason that *"Those who have earned [Your] anger"* is mentioned first, directly after the mention of favour, and then *"Those who have gone astray"*.[8]

Consider carefully the succincity in which Allāh has mentioned the cause and resulting recompense for each of the three groups in this verse. Allāh's favouring a people includes guiding them which

---

[5] Ibn al-Qayyim, *Badā'i al-Fawā'id*, vol. 1, pp. 269-270; ash-Shanqīṭī, vol. 1, pg. 35

[6] Abū Ḥayyān, vol. 1, pg. 151; al-Ālūsi, vol. 1, pg. 130

[7] al-Baqā'ī, vol. 1, pg. 18; ibn Taymiyyah, vol. 10, pp. 301-302

[8] Abū Ḥayyān, vol. 1, pg. 152; al-Ālūsi, vol. 1, pg. 130; Ibn al-Qayyim, *Badā'i al-Fawā'id*, vol. 1, pp. 273

in turn comprises beneficial knowledge and righteous actions, it also includes them being granted the best and most complete of rewards; *"You have favoured"* includes both matters. *"Those who have earned [Your] anger"* also comprises two matters: the recompense of anger which necessarily leads to punishment and disgrace; and also the cause for this anger, for Allāh is too merciful and kind to be angry at one who does not deserve it, also from the consequences of His anger is one's being misguided. *"Those who have gone astray"* necessary leads to His being angry at them and their deserving punishment. So the cause behind each group and their recompense has been mentioned in the most concise and eloquent way possible.[9]

This verse also contains an encouragment towards studying history, for it is through history that we will learn of the Jews and Christians, of the believers and the ends of their opponents.[10] Allah, Exalted is He says,

وَلَقَدِ ٱسْتُهْزِئَ بِرُسُلٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَحَاقَ
بِٱلَّذِينَ سَخِرُوا۟ مِنْهُم مَّا كَانُوا۟ بِهِۦ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿١٠﴾
قُلْ سِيرُوا۟ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ ٱنظُرُوا۟ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَٰقِبَةُ
ٱلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿١١﴾

«Already were the Messengers mocked before you, but those who jeered were engulfed by what they mocked. Say: travel about the earth and see the final fate of the deniers»

[*al-An'ām* (6): 10-11]

---

[9] ibn al-Qayyim, pg. 13

[9] Rashīd Riḍā, vol. 1, pg. 60. See also ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fi-t-Tārikh*, vol. 1, pp. 7-9

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَيْفَ يُبْدِئُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُۥٓ ۚ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿١٩﴾ قُلْ سِيرُوا۟ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ فَٱنظُرُوا۟ كَيْفَ بَدَأَ ٱلْخَلْقَ ۚ ثُمَّ ٱللَّهُ يُنشِئُ ٱلنَّشْأَةَ ٱلْـَٔاخِرَةَ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٠﴾

«Have they not considered how Allāh brings creation out of nothing, then reproduces it? That is easy for Allāh. Say: travel about the earth and see how He brought creation out of nothing. Then later will Allāh bring about the next existence»

[*al-'Ankabūt* (29): 19-20]

9.4 A means of displaying good manners

It is important to note that in this verse when the blessings of Allāh have been mentioned they have been mentioned in the second person such that Allāh is directly referred to, "*The path of those whom You have favoured.*" However when the anger or punishment of Allāh is mentioned it is mentioned in the third person such that Allāh is not directly referred to, "*Not the path of those who have earned [Your] anger, nor of those who have gone astray.*" This even though He is the One in reality who is angry with them, and He is the One by whose decree they were misguided as proven by His sayings,[11]

﴿ أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى ٱلَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْا۟ قَوْمًا غَضِبَ ٱللَّهُ

«Have you not considered those who make allies of a people with whom Allāh has become angry»

[*al-Mujādilah* (58): 14]

[11] ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 55

مَن يُضْلِلِ ٱللَّهُ فَلَا هَادِىَ لَهُۥ ۚ وَيَذَرُهُمْ فِى طُغْيَٰنِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١٨٦﴾

«Whoever Allāh sends astray - there is no guide for him and He leaves them in their transgression, wandering blindly»

[*al-A'rāf* (7): 186]

and other verses proving that guidance and misguidance is the sole responsibility of Allāh.[12]

This is a method that is used throughout the Qur'ān and it is a way of showing respect to Allāh and not attributing evil to Him as well as showing how belittled such people are. This was clearly expressed in the supplication of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) when he said,

> I am completely at Your service and doing all I can to please You. All good is in Your hands and evil does not pertain to You.[13]

Ibn al-Qayyim explains this ḥadīth and this concept further,

> The meaning of this ḥadīth is far greater and wider then the [explanations presented by some saying that it means], 'evil does not come close to you' or 'evil [deeds] are not raised to you.' This is because these explanations only serve to absolve Him of any evil coming close to Him or evil [deeds] being raised to him, however they

[12] For more detail and explanation of decree (*qadr*) refer to the book 'Fate in Islaam' by Dr. Saaleh as-Saaleh.

[13] Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 373 #1695

do not explicitly absolve Him of evil with regards His Essence, Attributes and Actions. This is not the full purport of the words of the Truthful One, the one entrusted and preserved from error for his (ﷺ) words absolve Him of any evil whatsoever being linked to His Essence, Attributes and Actions. However it is possible that evil be contained in His creation as occurs in His words,

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ ٱلْفَلَقِ ﴿١﴾ مِن شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ ﴿٢﴾

«Say: I take refuge with the Lord of Daybreak. From the evil of what He created»

[*al-Falaq* (113): 1-2]

Contemplate the style of the Qur'ān and see how sometimes it adjoins evil to its cause and those who enact it such as His sayings,

وَٱلْكَٰفِرُونَ هُمُ ٱلظَّٰلِمُونَ ﴿٢٥٤﴾

«The disbelievers are [truly] the oppressors and wrong-doers»

[*al-Baqarah* (2): 254]

وَٱللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِى ٱلْقَوْمَ ٱلْفَٰسِقِينَ ﴿١٠٨﴾

«And Allāh does not guide a sinful, rebellious people»

[*al-Mā'idah* (5): 108]

فَبِظُلْمٍ مِّنَ ٱلَّذِينَ هَادُوا۟
حَرَّمْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ طَيِّبَٰتٍ أُحِلَّتْ لَهُمْ

«For the wrongdoing on the part of the Jews, We

made unlawful for them [certain] foods that had previously been lawful for them»

[*an-Nisā'* (4): 160]

سَأَصْرِفُ عَنْ ءَايَٰتِيَ ٱلَّذِينَ يَتَكَبَّرُونَ

«That was Our recompense for their transgression»

[*al-An'ām* (6): 146]

وَمَا ظَلَمْنَٰهُمْ وَلَٰكِن كَانُوا۟ هُمُ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾

«We did no injustice to them, rather it was they who were unjust, wrong-doers»

[*az-Zukhruf* (43): 76]

Sometimes the subject [of the sentence] is omitted as in His sayings,

وَأَنَّا لَا نَدْرِىٓ أَشَرٌّ أُرِيدَ
بِمَن فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ أَمْ أَرَادَ بِهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ رَشَدًا ﴿١٠﴾

«And we do not know whether evil is intended for those who are on the earth, or whether their Lord desires guidance for them»

[*al-Jinn* (72): 10]

This verse omits the one who intends the evil but explicitly states the one who intends good. In a similar vein is His saying,

صِرَٰطَ ٱلَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ ٱلْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا ٱلضَّآلِّينَ ۝٧

«...The path of those whom You have favoured, not the path of those who have earned [Your] anger nor those who have gone astray»

[*al-Fātiḥah* (1): 7]

Hence He mentioned the favour adjoined to Himself, misguidance adjoined to those who committed it and omitted the enactor of the anger. Likewise is the saying of Khiḍr with regards the ship,

فَأَرَدتُّ أَنْ أَعِيبَهَا

«So I wished to cause a defect in it»

[*al-Kahf* (18): 79]

And his saying with regards the orphans,

فَأَرَادَ رَبُّكَ أَن يَبْلُغَآ أَشُدَّهُمَا وَيَسْتَخْرِجَا كَنزَهُمَا رَحْمَةً مِّن رَّبِّكَ

«So your Lord intended that they reach maturity and then extract their treasure as a mercy from your Lord»

[*al-Kahf* (18): 82]

Likewise is His saying,

وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ ٱلْإِيمَٰنَ وَزَيَّنَهُۥ فِى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ ٱلْكُفْرَ وَٱلْفُسُوقَ وَٱلْعِصْيَانَ ۚ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلرَّٰشِدُونَ ۝٧

«Allāh has endeared faith for you and made it pleasing in your hearts and has made hateful to you disbelief, disobedience and sins»

[*al-Ḥujurāt* (49): 7]

زُيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ ٱلشَّهَوَٰتِ

«Beautified for people is the love of that which they desire»

[*Āli 'Imrān* (3): 14]

omitting the one who made it beautiful for them. [Ibrāhīm] al-Khalīl (ﷺ) said,

ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَنِى فَهُوَ يَهْدِينِ ﴿٧٨﴾ وَٱلَّذِى هُوَ يُطْعِمُنِى وَيَسْقِينِ
﴿٧٩﴾ وَإِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَٱلَّذِى يُمِيتُنِى ثُمَّ
يُحْيِينِ ﴿٨١﴾ وَٱلَّذِىٓ أَطْمَعُ أَن يَغْفِرَ لِى خَطِيٓـَٔتِى يَوْمَ ٱلدِّينِ

«It is He who created me and it is He who guides me. It is He who feeds me and gives me to drink. When I am ill it is He who cures me. It is He who will cause me to die and then bring me back to life. I hope that He will forgive me my sin on the Day of Recompense»

[*ash-Shu'arā* (26): 77-82]

So he attributed all aspects of perfection to Him in these actions but attributed to himself any [seeming] deficiency - this being illness and sin.

We have explained this matter in depth in our book, *al-Fawā'id al-Makkiyyah* and I have explained there the difference between the sayings of Allāh,

مِّنَ ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا۟ ٱلْكِتَـٰبَ

«Those who have been given the Book»

[*al-Baqarah* (2): 101]

And His sayings,

ٱلَّذِينَ ءَاتَيْنَـٰهُمُ ٱلْكِتَـٰبَ

«Those to whom We have given the Book»

[*al-Baqarah* (2): 121]

Saying that He mentioned Himself explicitly in those contexts in which He praises [the People of the Book] but omits His mention in those places that He censures them. This then, is one of the secrets of the [literary style] of the Qur'ān.

Exactly the same applies to His sayings,

ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا ٱلْكِتَـٰبَ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا

«Then We caused to inherit the Scripture those We have chosen of Our servants»

[*al-Fāṭir* (35): 32]

وَإِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ
أُورِثُوا۟ ٱلْكِتَـٰبَ مِنۢ بَعْدِهِمْ لَفِى شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ مُرِيبٍ ﴿١٤﴾

«Indeed those who were granted inheritance of the Scripture after them are in disquieting doubt concerning it»

[*ash-Shūra* (42): 14]

فَخَلَفَ مِنۢ بَعۡدِهِمۡ خَلۡفٞ
وَرِثُواْ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ يَأۡخُذُونَ عَرَضَ هَٰذَا ٱلۡأَدۡنَىٰ

«And there followed them successors who inherited the Scripture while taking unlawful gains and pleasures in this lower life»

[*al-A'rāf* (7): 169]

Therefore in conclusion only the good, wisdom and benefit is adjoined to Allāh, Exalted is He, whereas evil does not pertain to him.[16]

This verse also contains yet another indication that the mercy of Allāh precedes His wrath, this is because to favour one is to display goodness and mercy to that person, to be angry leads to his being punished in a just fashion, hence the mercy is directly linked to Allāh and the anger is abstracted. It is also said that another reason for the verse being phrased in this way is that Allāh Alone is the One who grants blessings and favours, but as for being angry at His enemies, not only is He angry but His Angels, Prophets and *Awliyā'* become angry when He becomes angry.[15]

---

[14] ibn al-Qayyim, *Badā'i al-Fawā'id*, vol. 1, pp. 454-455 and pp.256-260

[15] ibn al-Qayyim, pp. 12

CHAPTER X

The Saying of *Āmīn* After Reciting *al-Fātiḥah*

It is recommended for the one reciting the Qur'ān to say *Āmīn* after having recited *al-Fātiḥah* and after a short pause upon completing the word *"ḍāllīn"* so as to differentiate between that which is the Qur'ān and that which is not.[1]

The meaning of *Āmīn* in the eyes of the majority is, 'O Allāh respond to our supplication.' Maqātil said that it gives strength to the supplication and is a cause for the descent of blessings.[2] 'Alī (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) said, '*Āmīn* is the seal of the Lord of the worlds, it is with it that His servants seal their supplications.'[3]

In *Sūrah Yūnus* the following supplication of Mūsā (*alayhi-salām*) is mentioned,

---

[1] al-Baghawī, vol. 1, pg. 55; al-Qurṭubī, vol. 1, pg. 89; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 55; al-Ālūsī, vol. 1, pg. 131

[2] al-Qurṭubī, vol. 1, pg. 90; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 56

[3] ibn 'Aṭiyyah, vol. 1, pg. 79

وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ
رَبَّنَآ إِنَّكَ ءَاتَيْتَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَأَهُۥ زِينَةً وَأَمْوَٰلًا فِى ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ
ٱلدُّنْيَا رَبَّنَا لِيُضِلُّوا۟ عَن سَبِيلِكَ ۖ رَبَّنَا ٱطْمِسْ عَلَىٰٓ أَمْوَٰلِهِمْ
وَٱشْدُدْ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُوا۟ حَتَّىٰ يَرَوُا۟ ٱلْعَذَابَ ٱلْأَلِيمَ ﴿٨٨﴾
قَالَ قَدْ أُجِيبَت دَّعْوَتُكُمَا فَٱسْتَقِيمَا وَلَا تَتَّبِعَآنِّ سَبِيلَ
ٱلَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٩﴾

«Mūsā said, 'O Lord! You have indeed bestowed splendour and wealth upon Pharaoh and his chiefs in the life of this world, our Lord! That they may lead men astray from Your path. Our Lord! Destroy their wealth and harden their hearts so that they will not believe until they see the painful torment.' Allāh said, 'Verily the supplication of you both is answered...'»

[*Yūnus* (10): 88-89]

In the commentary to this verse it is stated that Mūsā was saying the supplication and Hārūn was saying *Āmīn* and hence he was considered to be amongst the supplicants.[4]

al-Ḥakīm at-Tirmidhī, *Nawādir al-Usūl* records on the authority of Anas bin Mālik (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

> Allāh has given my nation three things that were not given to any nation before them: The *salām*, which is the greeting of the inhabitants of Paradise; the rows of the

[4] As stated by Abū al-'Āliyah, Abū Ṣāliḥ, 'Ikrimah, Muḥammad ibn Ka'b and ar-Rabī' ibn Anas; Ibn Kathīr, vol. 2, pg. 565; al-Qurṭubī, vol. 1, pg. 90

> Angels; and the *Āmīn*, which was only previously given to Mūsā and Hārūn.[5]

Ibn Mājah also reports on the authority of 'Ā'ishah (*radiyAllāhu 'anhu*) that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said,

> The Jews do not envy you for anything as much as they envy you for saying the *salām* and *Āmīn*.[6]

Abū Dāwūd reports on the authority of Abū Miṣbaḥ al-Maqrānī that he said,

> We were sitting with Abū Zuhayr an-Numayrī who was one of the Companions and his speech used to be the most beautiful speech. Whenever a person from amongst us supplicated he would say, 'Complete it by saying *Āmīn* for indeed *Āmīn* is like the seal on a scroll.'
>
> Abū Zuhayr said, 'Shall I not inform you about this? We left with the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) one night and we came upon a person who was persistently and actively [supplicating] for something. The Prophet (ﷺ) stood listening to him. Then the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "It will definitely be answered if he completes it." A man from amongst the people [present] asked, 'With what should he complete it?' He replied, "By saying *Āmīn* for if he completes it by saying *Āmīn* it will definitely be answered." So the man who asked turned away and went to the supplicant and said, "O so-and-so! Complete [your sup-

---

[5] al-Qurṭubī, vol. 1, pg. 90; as-Suyūṭī, vol. 1, pg. 44

[6] ibn Mājah #856. al-Būṣayrī said its isnād was ṣaḥīḥ and it was declared so by ibn Khuzaymah; al-Manāwī, vol. 5, pg. 562, and al-Albānī #5613
It is also recorded on the authority of ibn 'Abbās by ibn Mājah #857 with a ḍa'īf isnād as per al-Būṣayrī and as-Suyūṭī, vol. 1, pg. 44

plication] and rejoice." "[7]

With regards to prayer, Muslim records on the authority of Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) that he said,

> The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) addressed us and explained to us our Sunnah [that we should follow] and explained to us [the method of performing] our prayer. He said, "When you pray, straighten your rows and let one of you lead you. When he says the *takbīr* then say the *takbīr*, when he says, *"Not [the path] of those who have earned [Your] anger nor those who have gone astray"* then say *Āmīn* and Allāh will respond to you."[8]

Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiyAllāhu 'anhu*) reports on the authority of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) that he said,

> When the Imām says *Āmīn* then say *Āmīn* for indeed the one whose *Āmīn* coincides with the *Āmīn* of the Angels will have his previous [minor] sins forgiven.[9]

So this ḥadīth shows that ones previous sins will be forgiven if four conditions are met:

1. The Imām saying *Āmīn*.
2. The follower saying *Āmīn*.
3. The Angels saying *āmīn*.
4. The statements coinciding.[10]

---

[7] Sunan Abū Dāwūd Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 239 #938. as-Suyūṭī, vol. 1, pg. 44 said the isnād was ḥasan but it was declared ḍa'īf by al-Albānī #2111

[8] Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 221 #800

[9] Muslim Eng. Trans., vol. 1, pg. 225 #809

[10] al-Qurṭubī, vol. 1, pg. 89

CHAPTER XI

Conclusions

11.1 *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* is a Cure for the Diseases of the Heart and the Body

The disease of the heart occurs due to two basic matters:

One. The corruption of knowledge
Two. The corruption of intent.

These in turn lead to two fatal illnesses: misguidance and anger, misguidance being the end result of the corruption of knowledge and anger being the end result of the corruption of intent. These two illnesses are the lords of all the diseases of the heart.

When one asks for guidance to the Straight Path, he is asking for that which will cure the disease of misguidance. This is why this *Sūrah* has been made obligatory upon every servant in every prayer.

Actualising the verse, *"You Alone we worship and You Alone we ask for help"* serves as a cure for the corruption of intent. This is because the intent is linked to the objectives and means of attaining them. Therefore this cure is composed of six matters:

One. Worshipping Allāh Alone

Two. By performing what He commanded and legislated

Three. Not by following ones own desires

Four. Neither by following the mere opinions of people

Five. By asking Allāh for His help to enact this

Six. And not relying on oneself

Furthermore the heart is beset with two dangerous and destructive diseases and this verse serves as a cure for them. Ibn Taymiyyah said,

> *"You Alone we worship"* represses ostentation and *"You Alone we ask for help"* represses arrogance.[1]

As regards its curing the bodily illnesses, this can be seen in the ḥadīth of Abū Sa'īd recorded by Bukhārī that after he had recited it to cure a person who had been bitten by a scorpion, the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said to him,

> ...and what made you to know that it was a *ruqyā*?[2]

[1] ibn al-Qayyim, pp. 46-48, the quote can be found in ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' Fatāwā*, vol. 10, pg. 277

[2] This discussion is summarised from ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārij as-Sālikīn*, vol. 1, pp. 64-66

11.2 *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* Comprises a Refutation of Many of the Principle Innovations

From the amazing qualities of *al-Fātiḥah* is that despite its few words, it contains a refutation of many principle innovations. This can be seen generally in the statement, *"Guide us to the Straight Path"* for the Straight Path refers to the truth and giving this truth preference over ones desires. This truth is embodied in the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the way of the Companions. Any departure from this way is most definitely misguidance.

Specifically we see that *al-Fātiḥah*:

1. Establishes the need for Prophethood

This can be seen from His words, *"Lord of the worlds,"* for it does not befit One with such a description that He leave His creation wondering aimlessly, without guidance.

It can also be seen from His words, *"Master of the Day of Judgement,"* for this is the Day on which the servants will be judged for their deeds - punished for their transgressions and rewarded for their obedience. However they are in need of knowing what obedience and disobedience is.

It can also be seen from His saying, *"You Alone we worship,"* for worship consists only of that which Allāh loves and is pleased with. The servants have no way of knowing this except through the Prophets.

It can also be seen from His words, *"Guide us to the Straight Path,"* for guidance consists of clarification followed by the divine accord

to enact it. This requires Prophets.

2. It refutes the proponents of *Waḥdatu-l-Wujūd* (Unity of Being)

Those who state that there is no distinction between the created and Creator, that the servant is the Lord, that there is no King and subjects, that there is no worshipper and worshipped etc... This *Sūrah* refutes this heresy from beginning to end in words that are too clear to require further explanation.

3. It refutes the *Majūs* and the *Qadariyyah*.

Those who, in effect, affirm two lords. Those who state that their actions have no link to the *qadr* of Allāh, that actions are not created and that they arise by the complete free will of the servants. This implies that Allāh is not the Lord over their actions and as such the affirmation of Lordship in this *Sūrah* refutes them.

In the words, *"You Alone we ask for help"* also lies a clear refutation of this heresy, for by saying these words we are seeking help in performing that which must be under His control and authority.

4. It refutes the *Jahmiyyah* (those who deny the Attributes of Allāh)

This can be seen in our praising Him for praise necessitates the affirmation of everything that He is praised for such as His Perfect Attributes.

Also it affirms the Attribute of mercy and this further includes affirmation of Attributes that are necessary for this to exist such as life, will, ability/power, hearing and seeing.

It also affirms the Lordship of Allāh which in turn necessitates the affirmation of His Actions. Similarly it affirms the Godship of

Allāh and this necessitates the affirmation of Perfect descriptions both of His Essence as well as Actions.

5. It refutes those who worship others besides Allāh

This can clearly be seen in the words, *"You Alone we worship and You Alone we ask for help"*

It can also be seen in the words, "Guide us to the Straight Path" for this is the path of those who have actualised *Tawḥīd.*

6. It refutes the *Jabariyyah* (those who say that man is coerced).

This can be seen in our praising Him for this necessitates that He would not punish His servants for that which they have no choice in or something that is beyond their ability.

This can also been understood in the affirmation of His mercy and in the affirmation of worship and its attribution to the servants, *"we worship"*.

7. It refutes those who say that the creation is eternal

This can be seen in our praising Him, for this necessarily implies the affirmation of His Actions.

It can also be seen in the affirmation of His Lordship over the *'ālam* which, as has preceded, is everything besides Allāh. Hence the creation is subjugated by a Lord (*marbūb*) and anything that is subjugated must necessarily be created. Something that is created must have come into existence at some time.

It can also be seen in the affirmation of His *Tawḥīd* for this ne-

cessitates that none of His creation share in any of His specific qualities of Lordship.

8. It refutes the *Rāfiḍah*.

This lies in *al-Fātiḥah* dividing mankind into three categories: those who have been favoured, those who have earned anger and those who have been misguided. The first category are those who traverse the Straight Path, who follow the truth and there is no doubt that the Companions of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) fit this description better than the *Rawāfiḍah*. It is impossible that the Companions be ignorant of the truth yet the *Rawāfiḍah* know it, or that the Companions reject it and they take to it!

Furthermore we see the actions and resulting consequences of these two groups showing us who is upon the truth. We see the Companions conquering the lands of the disbelievers and making them the lands of Islām and we see them conquering the hearts by the Qur'ān, correct knowledge and guidance.

However we see the opposite effects in the *Rawāfiḍah* in every time and place, and history is the greatest testimony to this - how they aided the enemies of Islām against the Muslim. How many tragedies amongst the Muslims they were guilty of perpetrating, how many *Masajid* were desecrated and Qur'ānic texts burnt on account of them, and how many Muslims and their scholars were killed due to them.

It is due to this that the Straight Path has been explained by some to be the way of Abū Bakr and 'Umar as has preceded.[3]

[3] This whole section is taken from ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārij as-Sālikīn*, vol. 1, pp. 69-84 summarised.

11.3 *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* Comprises the Meaning of the Entire Qur'ān

As alluded to earlier, *al-Fātiḥah* is named the Mother of the Qur'ān because it succinctly summarises the whole of the Qur'ān. We are now in a position to analyse this statement further.

- The *Sūrah* includes affirmation of *Tawḥīd* in all of its various categories,[4]

1. *Tawḥīd ar-Rubūbiyyah*, meaning unity of Allāh's Lordship, contained in His saying, *"Lord of the worlds."*

2. *Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah*, meaning unity of Allāh's worship in that all worship is to be done sincerely for His sake Alone, contained in His saying, *"You Alone we worship and Your aid Alone we seek."*

3. *Tawḥīd al-Asmā' wa-s-Ṣifāt*, meaning the unity of Allāh's Names and Attributes in that they are perfect and unique to Him, contained in His saying, *"all praise and thanks are due to Allāh."*

    - It teaches us to praise and glorify Allāh by mentioning His beautiful and perfect Names and Attributes.

    - It teaches us about His mercy and His justice.

    - It teaches us about the Day of Judgement and about the recompense of our deeds.

[4] Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān, *ad-Dīn al-Khāliṣ*, vol. 1, pp. 7+, mentions thirty ways in which this Sūrah emphasises *Tawḥīd*.

- It teaches us that the recompense will be established upon perfect justice.
- It encourages one to perform righteous actions and dissuades one from performing sins.
- It teaches us to ask of Him Alone, to humble ourselves before Him and worship Him Alone and to put our trust and reliance in Him Alone.
- It teaches us to ask Allāh continuously for guidance to the Straight Path.
- It points us towards the nations of the past and warns us against falling into the same acts of transgression and misguidance that they were guilty of.
- It teaches us to aspire to the company of the sincerely truthful, the martyrs and the righteous.
- It teaches that there is nothing in the Qur'ān that would give aid to or encourage innovation. Hence never will the innovator be able to find evidence for his misguidance in the Qur'ān.[5]

al-Fātiḥah is a supplication that Allāh teaches us to say with the purpose of attaining right guidance in this life and then next. Its place at the beginning of the Qur'ān signifies that we are supposed to read the Book with the aim of dicovering right guidance and following it. As such this opening Sūrah is like an introduction and summary of the Qur'ān, its relationship is that of petition and re-

[5] ibn al-Qayyim, pg. 5; ibn Kathīr, vol. 1, pg. 55

sponse. Man asks for right guidance, and the rest of the Qur'ān is the answer to that request.

And all praise and thanks are due to Allāh, the Lord of the worlds.

Biographies

The Companions

'Ā'ishah: bint Abū Bakr *as-Ṣiddīq*, the Mother of the Believers and most beloved wife of the Prophet (ﷺ). She reported many *aḥādīth* from the Prophet and many Companions and Successors reported from her. She died in the year 58H.

'Abdullāh bin 'Abbās: bin 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib bin Hāshim bin 'Abd Munāf al-Qurashī al-Hāshimī, the cousin of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the interpreter of the Qur'ān. He was born three years before the *Hijrah* and was called the 'Ocean of knowledge' due to his vast knowledge. He took part in the *Jihād* in North Africa in the year 27H and died in the year 68H.

'Abdullāh bin 'Amr: bin al-'Ās bin Wā'il bin Hāshim bin Su'ayd bin Sa'd bin Sahm as-Sahmī. He and his father were Companions. He was literate and attained permission from the Prophet (ﷺ) to write everything he said. He died in the year 65H.

'Abdullāh bin Mas'ūd: bin Ghāfil bin Ḥabīb al-Hadhlī Abū 'Abdur-Raḥmān. One of the scholars amongst the Companions and he witnessed *Badr* and the following battles. He had many virtues and died in the year 32H.

'Abdullāh bin 'Umar: bin al-Khaṭṭāb al-'Adawī, Abū 'Abdur-Raḥmān, the noble Companion and scholar. He reported many *aḥādīth* from the Messenger (ﷺ) and died in the year 73H.

'Abdur-Raḥmān bin Auf: bin Awf bin Abd Awf bin al-Ḥārith al-Qurashī az-Zuhrī, Abū Muḥammad, one of the ten promised Paradise. He migrated to Abysinnia on both occasions and witnessed every battle with the Prophet (ﷺ). He was very rich and very generous when giving in the Way of Allāh. He died in the year 32H.

Abū Bakr as-Ṣiddīq: 'Abdullāh bin 'Uthmān bin Āmir al-Qurashī. The first *Khalīfah* of the Messenger (ﷺ), his companion in the cave, his closest friend and one of the ten promised Paradise. He was the first man to accept Islām and died in the year 13H.

Abū ad-Dardā': Uwaymir bin Mālik bin Zayd bin Qays al-Khazrajī al-Anṣārī. There is a difference of opinion concerning his name. He accepted Islām on the day of *Badr* and witnessed *Uḥud*. He was from the Legal Jurists and ascetics of the Companions. He died in the year 32H.

Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī: Jundub bin Junādah bin Sakn, he was of those who accepted Islām early on but delayed his migration and hence did not witness *Badr*. His virtues are many and he died in the year 32H.

Abū Hurayrah: 'Abdur-Raḥmān bin Ṣakhr ad-Dusī. His name is greatly differed over. He accepted Islām in the year 7H and reported the most ḥadīth from the Prophet (ﷺ). He died in the year 59H.

Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī: 'Abdullāh bin Qays bin Salīm. He had a beautiful recitation and was one of the scholars amongst the Companions. He died in the year 42H or 44H.

Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī: Sa'd bin Mālik bin Sinān bin 'Ubaid al-Anṣārī al-Khazrajī. He and his father were both Companions and he witnessed all the battles that followed *Uḥud*. He was one of the scholars amongst the Companions and reported many *aḥādīth* from the Messenger (ﷺ). He died in the year 74H.

Abū 'Ubaidah bin al-Jarrāḥ: 'Āmir bin 'Abdullāh bin al-Jarrāḥ bin Hilāl al-Qurashī al-Fahrī, one of the ten promised Paradise. He accepted Islām early on and witnessed the battle of *Badr* and the following battles. He is the trustworthy one of this nation and died as a martyr due to a plague in the year 18H at the age of fifty-eight.

'Adī bin Ḥātim: bin 'Abdullāh bin Sa'd bin al-Ḥashraj bin 'Amr al-Qays at-Ṭā'ī, Abu Ṭarīf. He was a Christian who accepted Islām and witnessed the battles of *al-Jamal*, *Ṣiffīn* and *an-Nahrawān* with 'Alī. He died in the year 68H.

'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib: bin 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib bin Hāshim al-Qurashī al-Hāshimī, the fourth Rightly Guided *Khalīfah* and one of ten promised Paradise. He accepted Islām at the age of thirteen and was famous for his chivalry, bravery and knowledge. He married Fāṭimah, the daughter of the Prophet (ﷺ) and was martyred in the year 40H.

'Amr bin al-'Āṣ: bin Wā'il al-Qurashī as-Sahmī. He accepted Islām during the year of *Ḥudaybiyyah* and was the one who conquered Egypt. He died in the year 43H.

Anas bin Mālik: bin an-Naḍar bin Ḍamḍam al-Anṣārī al-Khazrajī, the servant of the Messenger (ﷺ). He witnessed *Badr* but was not of age to actually participate. He died in the year 93H.

Jābir bin 'Abdullāh: bin 'Amr bin Ḥarrām al-Anṣārī as-Sulamī, he wit-

nessed the second pledge at *'Uqbah* while he was still a child. It is said that he witnessed *Badr* and *Uḥud* and he reported many *aḥādīth* from the Messenger (ﷺ). He died in the year 74H.

Khālid bin al-Walīd: bin al-Mughīrah al-Makhzūmī al-Qurashī Abū Sulaymān. He was a great warrior and military leader and was given the nickname, 'Sword of Allāh.' He died in the year 21H.

Mu'ādh bin Jabal: bin 'Amr bin Aws al-Anṣārī al-Khazrajī, Abū 'Abdur-Raḥmān, one of the foremost Companions known for his knowledge of legal rulings and the Qur'ān. He was present at the pledge of *'Uqbah* and witnessed *Badr* and the following battles and was martyred due to a plague in the year 17H or 18H.

Mu'āwiyah: bin Abū Sufyān bin Ṣakhr bin Ḥarb bin Umayyah bin 'Abd Shams al-Qurashī al-Amawī. He accepted Islām in the year of the Conquest and witnessed *Ḥunain* and *al-Yamāmah*. He was one of the scribes who would write the revelation and died in the year 60H.

Sa'd bin Abī Waqqās: Sa'd bin Mālik bin Ahīb bin 'Abd Munāf al-Qurashī az-Zuhrī Abū Isḥāq bin Abī Waqqās. One of the ten who were promised Paradise and one whose supplications were answered. He was the last of the ten to pass away in the year 55H.

Salmān: al-Fārisī Abū 'Abdullāh, the servant of the Messenger (ﷺ). The first battle he witnessed was *al-Khandaq* and he was present at all following battles. He died in the year 36H.

Shaddād bin Aws: bin Thābit al-Anṣārī al-Khazrajī, Abū Ya'lā. He was famous for his knowledge and wisdom and died in the year 58H.

Ṭalḥah: bin 'Ubaydullāh bin 'Uthmān bin 'Amr al-Qurashī, Abū

Muḥammad, one of the ten promised Paradise. He witnessed *Uḥud* and the following battles. He died in the year 36H.

'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb: Abū Ḥafs 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb bin Nufayl al-Qurashī al-'Adawī, the second Rightly Guided *Khalīfah* and one of the ten promised Paradise. He accepted Islām five years before the *Hijrah* and his acceptance was a great victory for the Muslims. He witnessed every battle that the Prophet (ﷺ) witnessed. He was martyred in the year 23H.

'Uthmān bin 'Affān: *Dhu an-Nurayn* 'Uthmān bin 'Affān bin Abū al-'Ās bin Umayyah al-Qurashī al-Amawī, the third Rightly Guided *Khalīfah* and one of the ten promised Paradise. He was known for his generosity and freely giving in the Way of Allāh. He was married to two daughters of the Prophet (ﷺ), Ruqayyah and after her death, Umm Kulthūm. He was martyred in the year 35H.

The Successors

Al-Awzā'ī: 'Abdur-Raḥmān bin 'Amr bin Muḥammad, Abū 'Amr, one of the great scholars of his time. He was well versed in ḥadīth, *fiqh* and the military expeditions undertaken by the Prophet (ﷺ). The Muslims have agreed as to his excellence and being an *Imām*. His *fiqh* dominated Spain for a time and he died in the year 158H.

Ad-Ḍaḥḥāk: bin Muzāhim al-Hilālī, Abū al-Qāsim al-Khurasānī, the *Imām* of *tafsīr*. He was trustworthy and precise and a student of Sa'īd bin Jubair. He died in the year 105H.

Fuḍayl bin 'Iyāḍ: bin Mas'ūd at-Tamīmī, Abū 'Alī, the *shaykh* of Mecca

and one of the righteous worshippers. He was trustworthy and precise, noble, having *wara'* and narrated many *aḥādīth*. He died in the year 187H.

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī: Al-Ḥasan bin Abū al-Ḥasan al-Anṣārī. He was trustworthy and precise, noble and famous. He was a great scholar and narrated many *aḥādīth*. He died in the year 110H close to the age of ninety.

Sa'īd bin al-Musayyab: bin Ḥazn, Abū Muḥammad. He excelled in ḥadīth and *fiqh*, and was known for his worship and asceticism. He was one of the 'Seven Legal Jurists' of Madīnah and Imām Aḥmad regarded him to be the most virtuous of the Successors. He was trustworthy and precise and narrated many *aḥādīth*. He died in the year 94H.

Ash-Sha'bī: 'Āmir bin Sharāḥīl ash-Sha'bī al-Ḥumayrī, Abu 'Amr, the *Ḥāfiẓ*, Legal Jurist and poet. He died in the year 103H.

Sufyān ath-Thawrī: bin Sa'īd bin Masrūq, Abū 'Abdullāh ath-Thawree, one of the great *Imāms* and worshippers of this nation. He was titled 'The Leader of Believers in Ḥadīth' and was well versed in *tafsīr*. He was the teacher of Abū Ḥanīfah and Mālik amongst others and died in the year 161H.

'Urwah: bin az-Zubair bin al-'Awām al-Asadī, Abū 'Abdullāh. He was trustworthy and precise, a Legal Jurist, a scholar, and he narrated many *aḥādīth*. He died in the year 94H.

Az-Zuhrī: Muḥammad bin Muslim bin 'Ubaydullāh al-Qurasahī, Abū Bakr, one of the *Imāms* of this nation. He was one of the most knowledgeable people of his time of ḥadīth and the Qur'ān. He was trustworthy and precise and narrated many aḥādīth. He died in the year 124H.

Others

Abū al-'Abbās bin 'Aṭā': Aḥmad bin Muḥammad bin Sahl bin 'Aṭā' al-Admī, from the *shaykhs* of the *Ṣufis*. He died in the year 309H or 311H.

Abū Dāwūd: Sulaymān bin al-Ash'ath bin Isḥāq bin Bashīr, Abū Dāwūd as-Sijistānī, the *Imām*, *Ḥāfiẓ* and author of the famous *Sunan*. He died in the year 275H.

Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī: Muḥammad bin Muḥammad al-Ghazālī at-Ṭūsī, Abū Ḥāmid, he excelled in many sciences and authored a number of works such as *Iḥyā Ulum ad-Dīn* and *Tahāfat al-Falāsifah*. He was known for his worship and asceticism and died in the year 505H.

Aḥmad: bin Muḥammad bin Ḥanbal bin Hilāl ash-Shaybānī, Abū 'Abdullāh, the *Imām* of the *Sunnah* and author of the famous *Musnad*. He was known for his knowledge of ḥadīth, *fiqh*, and his *taqwā* and asceticism. He died in the year 241H.

Bukhārī: Muḥammad bin Ismā'īl bin Ibrāhīm bin al-Mughīrah, Abū 'Abdullāh. He was born in the year 194H and became one of the *Imāms* of ḥadīth and was nicknamed 'The Leader of the Believers in Ḥadīth.' He died in the year 256H.

Ibn Ḥibbān: Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad ibn Ḥibbān al-Tamīmī al-Bustī, the *Ḥāfiẓ*, *Mujtahid* and author of the famous *Ṣaḥīḥ ibn Ḥibbān*. He died in the year 354H.

Ibn al-Jawzī: 'Abdur-Raḥmān bin 'Alī bin Muḥammad, Abū al-Faraj al-Qurashī at-Tamīmī, the *Ḥāfiẓ* and *Imām*. He was a prolific writer and authored around three hundred works. He died in

the year 587H.

Muslim: bin al-Ḥajjāj bin Muslim al-Qushayrī, Abū al-Ḥusain an-Naisābūrī, the *Ḥāfiẓ* and one of the great *Imāms* of this nation. He is the author of the Ṣaḥīḥ which is the most authentic book of ḥadīth after Bukhārī. He died in the year 261H.

Najdah al-Ḥurūrī: bin 'Āmir al-Ḥanafī. He was one of the *Khawārij* who was unique, even amongst them, because he thought that it was obligatory to kill anyone who held an opposing view to him. He was killed in the year 69H.

Sahl bin 'Abdullāh: bin Yunūs Abū Muḥammad at-Tustorī, one of the *Ṣūfīs* scholars. He died in the year 283H.

Ash-Shāfi'ī: Muḥammad bin Idrees bin al-'Abbās bin Shāfi'ī al-Hāshimī al-Qurashī, Abū 'Abdullāh, the *Mujaddid* of his era and one of the great *Imāms* of this nation. He died in the year 204H.

Shayṭān: Also called *Iblīs*. He is a Jinn and the enemy of mankind, devoted to leading them astray in any way that he can. The word Shayṭān is derived from the verb *shaṭana* which means to be distant, and indeed Shayṭān is distant from all good.

At-Tirmidhī: Muḥammad bin 'Īsā bin Sawrah bin Mūsā bin ad-Ḍaḥḥāk as-Sulamī at-Tirmidhī, the *Imām*, *Ḥāfiẓ* and the author of the famous *Sunan*. He was trustworthy and precise and one of the students of Bukhārī. He died in the year 279H.

Glossary of Arabic Terms

Āyah: pl. *āyāt*. Sign, miracle, example, lesson, verse.
'Abd: pl. *'ebād*. slave, servant, worshipper.
Abrār: righteous.
Adhān: the call to prayer
Awliyā': plural of *walī*; friend, ally, loyal companion. From the word *wilāyah* meaning loyalty and closeness, the opposite of enmity.
'Ayy: withholding the tongue from speaking, carefully considering each word before it is said.
Barzakh: barrier, isthmus, A barrier that is erected between the deceased and this life preventing him from returning and a generic reference to the life that commences after death.
Bayān: Speech, clarification, discourse. It is of two types: the first whereby the intended meaning is expressed clearly, whatever language it may be in, this category is not regarded as magic; the second whereby the intended meaning is expressed in eloquent, cleverly doctored phrases based upon specific rules such that one listening takes pleasure in hearing the words and they affect his very heart. This category is what has been likened to magic as it captivates and beguiles the heart and overcomes the soul to the point that the face of reality could be transformed to illusion and the one captivated perceive only that which the speaker wants him to perceive. This category can be used in a commendable fashion and in a blameworthy fashion. As for the commendable form, it is to direct the person towards the truth

and use these methods to aid the truth. As for the blameworthy form, it is to direct the person towards falsehood or envelop him in confusion such that the truth is seen as falsehood and falsehood as truth. This is completely blameworthy and has been likened to that which is completely blameworthy - magic

Bid'ah: innovation, that which is newly introduced into the religion of Allāh.

Ḍa'īf: weak; the ḥadīth that is neither ṣaḥīḥ nor ḥasan because it fails to meet one of their requirements. It is of varying degrees of severity, the most severe of which being mawḍū', fabricated.

Dhawq: taste, perceptivity, technically referring to spiritual experience, *dhawq* is a more temporary state of *wajd*. One may receive some forms of inspiration in the heart as a result of these states however this inspiration should always be compared to the Book and Sunnah to ascertain its correctness.

Dhikr: remembrance, recollection, technically referring the remembrance of Allāh.

Du'ā: supplication, invocation, it is an action of worship that may only be directed to Allāh. It is of two types, supplication through worship (*du'ā 'ibādah*) and supplication of request (*du'ā mas'alah*). The first type of *du'ā* can be understood when one understands that every act of worship is done with the unstated plea that Allāh accept that action of worship and the desire to draw closer to him; and hence attain His pleasure. Hence every action of worship is a type of request to Allāh. The second type of *du'ā* is whereby one explicitly asks his Lord of something such as 'O Allāh! Grant me good in this world and the Hereafter.' The second type includes the first type and the first type necessitates the second type.

Farḍ: see *wājib*.

Fasād: corruption, decay, and invalidity.

Fatwā: *fiqh*: legal ruling.

Fiqh: understanding and comprehension. *fiqh*: of the rulings and legislation of Islām.

Fisq: pl. *fusūq*. Immorality, transgression, wickedness.

Fitnah: pl. *fitan*. Trial, tribulation, civil strife.

Fiṭrah: primordial nature, the harmony between man, creation and Creator.

Ghayb: the Unseen, those matters beyond our senses.

Ghubṭa: envy, referring to the permissible form of envy where the envier wishes to have the same blessings as the envied but without desiring to see them removed from the envied. This is opposed to *ḥasad*, the blameworthy form of envy where the envier wishes to see the blessings removed from the envied.

Ḥadīth: A text attributed to the Prophet (ﷺ) describing his actions, words, descriptions and tacit approvals. It consists of two portions, the body of the text (*matn*) and the *isnād*. Rarely the term is also used to refer to a text attributed to a Companion or a *Tābiʿī*.

Ḥāfiẓ: pl. *ḥuffāẓ*. Ḥadīth Master, commonly referred to one who has memorised at least 100,000 ḥadīths.

Ḥasan: good, fair. A ḥadīth whose *isnād* is continuously linked of just, morally upright narrators but whose precision (*ḍabṭ*) falls short of the requirements of the ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth; containing no irregularity (*shādh*) and no hidden defect (*ʿillah*). A ḥadīth can be ḥasan in and of itself, or contain a defect but still be ruled to be so due to supporting evidences.

Ḥudūd: limits, boundaries. The limits ordained by Allāh, prescribed punishments.

Ḥulūl wa-l-Ittiḥād: incarnation and unification, the settling of a superior faculty upon a support.

Iḥsān: beneficence, excellence. To worship Allāh as if one is seeing Him, and knowing that even though one sees Him not, He sees the servant.

ʿIlm: knowledge.

Īmān: The firm belief, complete acknowledgement and acceptance of all that Allāh and His Messenger have commanded to have faith in, submitting to it both inwardly and outwardly. It is the

acceptance and belief of the heart that includes the actions of the heart and body, therefore it encompasses the establishment of the whole religion. This is why the Imāms and Salaf used to say, 'Faith is the statement of the heart and tongue, action of the heart, tongue and limbs.' Hence it comprises statement, action and belief, it increases through obedience and decreases through disobedience. It includes the beliefs of faith, its morals and manners and the actions demanded by it.

Khalaf: successors. A reference to those who followed a path other than the path of the Salaf.

Khalīfah: pl. *khulafā'*. Successor, representative. The Successors of the Prophet (ﷺ), head of the Islāmic state. Also called *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* or Leader of the Believers.

Khushū': submissiveness, humility.

Kufr: denial, rejection, hiding, technically referring to disbelief. It can be major (removing a person from the fold of Islām) or minor (not removing a person from the fold of Islām).

Qadr: Divine Decree and Destiny.

Qur'ān: The actual Word of Allāh revealed to the Prophet (ﷺ) in the Arabic language through the medium of the Angel Gabriel and the greatest miracle bestowed him. It consists of 114 chapters commencing with al-Fātiḥah and ending with an-Nās.

Rahbah: dread.

RaḍiyAllāhu 'anhu/'anhā/'anhum/'anhumā: may Allāh be pleased with him/her/them/both of them.

RahimahAllāh/RahimahumAllāh: may Allāh bestow his mercy upon him/them.

Ramaḍān: ninth month of the Islāmic calendar.

Riḍā: contentment and pleasure.

Riyā': showing off, ostentation, an example of which lies in person beautifying actions of worship because he knows people are watching.

Ruqyā: recitation used to cure an illness or disease. It can only be

done in the Arabic tongue, in words whose meaning is understood, using verses of the Qur'ān or supplications of the Prophet combined with the belief that it is only Allāh who in reality gives the cure.

Ṣabr: patience and steadfastness, the restraint of ones self to that which is dictated by the divine law. It is of three levels, steadfastness in the obedience of Allāh, steadfastness in avoiding the prohibited matters and patience at the onset of calamity. *Ikhlāṣ* can never be complete without *ṣidq* and *ṣidq* can never be complete without *ikhlāṣ* and the two can never be complete without *ðabr*. The person is patient through Allāh, i.e. seeking His aid Alone; for Allāh, i.e. arising out of love for Him and the desire to draw close to Him; and with Allāh, i.e. doing only that which He wills.

Ṣaḥābah: The Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), those who saw him, believed in him and died upon that belief.

Ṣāḥīḥ: correct, authentic. A ḥadith which has a continuously linked *isnād*, of just, morally upright and precise narrators; containing no irregularity (*shādh*) or hidden defect (*'illah*). Hence five conditions have to be met: the *isnād* being continuously linked; the justice (*'adl*) of the narrator; the precision (*ḍabṭ*) of the narrator; its not being *shādh*; and its not containing an *'illah*. The ḥadīth can be ðaḥīḥ in and of itself, or it can contain a defect but still be ruled to be ṣaḥīḥ due to supporting evidences.

Salaf: predecessors. Technically used to refer to the best generations of Muslims, the first three generation: the *Ṣaḥābah*, the *Tābi'ūn* and the *Tab' Tābi'ūn* .

Shirk: association, technically referring to directing a right that is due to Allāh Alone to another object of creation, either completely or partially. It can be major (removing a person from the fold of Islām) or minor (not removing a person from the fold of Islām).

Sunan: a compilation of *aḥādīth*.

Sunnah: habit, customary practice, norm and usage as sanctioned by tradition. *fiqh*: the sayings, commands, prohibitions, actions, and tacit approvals of the Prophet (ﷺ).

Sūrah: chapter of the Qur'ān.

Ṣurah: image, form, face.

Tābi'ūn: The generation following that of the Companions.

Taqwā: the basic meaning of which is setting a barrier between two things. This is why it is said that one *ittaqā* with his shield, i.e. he set it as a barrier between him and the one who wished him evil. Therefore it is as if the one who has taqwa (*muttaqi*) has used his following the commands of Allāh and avoiding His prohibitions as a barrier between himself and the Punishment. Hence he has preserved and fortified himself against the punishment of Allāh through his obeying Him.

Tawḥīḍ: unification, monotheism, the belief in the absolute Oneness of Allāh. It is to believe that Allāh Alone is the creator, nourisher, and sustainer of the worlds; it is to believe that Allāh Alone deserves to be worshipped; and it is to believe that He has unique and perfect Names and Attributes that far transcend anything that one can imagine.

Ummah: nation, the Muslim nation.

Wuḍū': *fiqh*: ritual ablution.

Zakāh: *fiqh*: one of the pillars of Islām, an obligatory tax levied on a Muslim wealth subject to certain criteria.